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ABSTRACT

Two models for teaching fluency and literacy in English as a Second Language (ESL) and native language literacy are described and the effectiveness of these models is demonstrated. Both models use cultural sharing and problem-posing as a basis for language learning. The objectives of these teaching models are to use language learning as a vehicle for helping pre-literate individuals solve their own problems within the new society, and to enable them to decide what aspects of their past and present culture to retain or reject. Each of these objectives is met through students sharing their past cultures with one another and discussing the difficulties they are encountering in the new culture. A discussion demonstrates how the methods, approaches, and activities used in each model are congruent with theoretical assumptions, and provides a critical analysis of the models and of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the various methods and approaches used. The discussion draws on work with a group of Hmong refugees in an ESL/first language literacy class. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Two Models for Using Problem-posing and Cultural Sharing in Teaching the Hmong English as a Second Language and First Language Literacy

A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ADULT EDUCATION

BY

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Abstract

This thesis describes and demonstrates the efficacy of two models for teaching people to become both fluent and literate in English as a second language as well as literate in their mother tongue. Both of the models use cultural sharing and problem-posing as a basis for language learning. The objectives of the models are to use language learning as a vehicle to improve the self-confidence of the non-literates (people unable to read and write in their own language); to help them solve their own problems within the new society; and to enable them to decide what aspects of their past and new culture to retain or reject. Each of these objectives is met through the non-literates sharing their past cultures and discussing the difficulties they are encountering in the new culture.

The author shows how the methods, approaches and activities she uses in her models are congruent with her theoretical assumptions. She provides a critical analysis of the models, as well as of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the various methods and approaches used.

The thesis draws on the author's work with a group of people from Laos called the Hmong. The author describes how she developed the models in her role as a language and cultural facilitator in an English as a second language/first language literacy class with the Hmong.

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Chapter 1

Designing a Language Program to Meet the Needs of the Hmong

The Refugee Crisis and the Need for English Classes

Over the past six years there has been an influx of refugees to North America from many countries, including Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Iran, Poland, Russia, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Guatamala, Chile, Argentina and the Philippines. These people have left their countries for a variety of reasons, including oppression, political difficulties and economic hardships. Once the refugees arrive, they face many challenges in learning the new language and in adjusting to the new culture. Often because of their lack of language, they experience difficulties in finding and keeping jobs, using community agencies and resources, working out landlord-tenant relationships and understanding the legal system.

In recognition of the importance of employment as a vehicle for becoming an integral part of the economic structure of a community, the governments of Canada and the United States have funded adult English-as-a-second-language training programs, known as ESL here after. The primary aim of these training programs has been for the newcomers to attain employment. In general, the programs have been geared towards people who can already read and write in their mother tongue, i. e. who are first language literate (L1/ literate).

During the period from 1979-1984, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario received over 3,000 refugees among whom the highest numbers were Central Americans and South East Asians. Of the South East Asians, some 700 were Laotian and an additional 350 were Hmong, and a few families were Mien (Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, 1985). The Hmong (pronounced 'mung') and

Mien are minority societies in Laos.

Most of the Hmong and nearly all the Mien did not read or write in their own language. Shortly after arriving, they began studying ESL in standard community college and school board programs. However, unlike other newcomers who were Ll/ literate, the Hmong and Mien people's acquisition of English was painfully slow. In addition, since they came from a rural background, the Hmong had much greater difficulties in getting along in the new culture than did other newcomers who came from urban settings.

English in the Working Environment's Pilot Project

I first became acquainted with the Hmong between 1979-1980 through teaching in two community programs: one at the community college and another called Newcomer Language Orientation Course held in a church basement. Through this teaching I saw that the existing programs were not adequately helping the Hmong to learn ESL, to find jobs or, ultimately, to get along in their new culture. The relationships I formed with a few of the Hmong women helped me in reaching out to them in subsequent classes.

My experience in teaching in the community programs provided an opportunity to see other gaps in providing ESL to newcomers. The most obvious one was the lack of accessibility to ESL classes by factory workers. Newcomers often got jobs before completing the six months of free language training at the community college. Once they got jobs, they (especially the women) were unlikely to go to ESL classes in the evening. Impediments to taking classes included the lack of transportation, working night shifts, family responsibilities, and sheer exhaustion. Thus, in 1981, with the assistance of a grant from the Secretary of State and a community steering committee, I initiated a program to teach English in the workplace called English in the Working Environment (EWE).

Through teaching at worksites, EWE began to reach some people who had not been served before. However, there still was no program that successfully addressed the special needs of the non-literate (people who can neither read in their mother tongue nor in a second language) refugees who were coming from both Southeast Asia, and Central America. In 1983, EWE received another special grant from the Secretary of State to run a pilot project offering ESL and LI classes to three ethnic groups: Portuguese, Central Americans and Hmong. I was involved in teaching one of two classes offered to the Hmong.

My challenge was to try to find ways of enabling the Hmong people to become reasonably fluent in English, to become literate in Hmong, and to become adept at solving problems for themselves in this unfamiliar culture. In addition, because of their failures within existing educational institutions, I needed to find ways to help the Hmong regain their self-confidence.

The following work is drawn from a portion of the qualitative evaluation research on the literacy project which involved one of the two groups of Hmong. The broad goal of the ESL/LI project was to enhance the non-literates' language acquisition by teaching both first language literacy and English- as-second - language. The problem was that, until this pilot project, none of the community programs had found an approach which was successful in helping non-literates, particularly the Hmong and Central Americans, to learn English and get along independently in the community.

In this thesis I draw on my experiences in the role of language and cultural facilitator with the Hmong to describe my process of developing a new teaching method. The aim of the method is to enhance language learning and integration in the community. The method involves applying either of two models which each use cultural sharing and problem-posing as a basis for language teaching. Although both models involve the same basic steps, each begins at a different point and follows the steps in a different sequence.

The objectives of these models are to use language learning as a vehicle to build the non-literates' self-confidence, to help them solve their own problems within the new society, and to enable them to decide what aspects of their past and new culture to retain or discard. Each of these objectives depends on people sharing information about their past cultures and their daily problems in the new culture.

The models emerged out of my preparations for teacher workshops for EWE. Although I had used all the steps described in the models in my teaching, I only realized that I was using two different models and how the steps were ordered differently after I finished teaching the ESL/L1 literacy course.

Frequently, teachers complained that they did not know how to draw course material from the class members. They also said they did not know how to use problem-posing. In addition, they found they were unable to abandon their lesson plans or to be spontaneous. My intention in providing steps was to give the teachers a structure which encouraged spontaneity.

As I worked with the Hmong I learned from them how to develop an approach which best suited their ESL/LI needs. My literature research was done in the process and after completing an evaluation of the Hmong literacy project. I have chosen to share with the reader my own discovery process by describing the experiences and research of that project. Relevant research will be interwoven throughout the text, and particularly in the conclusions drawn from the research.

Rationale for the Pilot Project

The aim of the Hmong course was to find ways of helping the Hmong become literate in their mother tongue at the same time as they learned ESL. Previously, other community programs had used approaches falling into the two general categories of either the audio-lingual method or the functional-notional method.

The audio-lingual method is an oral method for teaching English which emphasizes rote memorization and drill of speech patterns in a set curriculum. Little, if any, time is spent on reading and writing. The functional-notional method emphasizes teaching the language which the learners need for everyday survival: banking, making appointments, taking the bus, shopping. The language includes those phrases needed for performing specific functions, such as talking to a teller at the bank. This method may use a set curriculum or one designed by the teacher to meet the specific needs of the learners.

In the first two to three years in which community programs were using these approaches, little progress was made in significantly improving the Hmong's ability to get along in the community. None of these programs were specifically teaching an approach which would help the people attempt to solve their own problems in the community, nor were they giving people the encouragement and communication tools which would assist them to change unfair treatment they experienced daily, e.g., being treated poorly by landlords. Furthermore, none of the existing community programs either made regular use of a translator or taught the courses bilingually. Finally, none of the programs paid attention to the important cultural role which the women in particular played in their societies.

EWE teachers found that, in cultures such as the Portuguese, Central American, or Vietnamese, the woman's role was to be the sustainer of the family and of the cultural traditions of the past. Implicit in sustaining the culture was keeping the first language. The consequence, conscious or unconscious, was not learning English as the second language. The women eventually became accustomed to being dependent on the family and ethnic community to function in the new society. Thus, these two factors, the women's illiteracy and their role in their family and cultural community, were kept in mind in designing the ESL/L1 literacy classes for the Hmong.

Objectives

The first objective, then, was to build-up the non-literates', and particularly the women's, confidence by enabling them to become literate in their own languages. The second objective was to increase the non-literates' awareness of the correlation between the spoken word (sound) and the written word (symbol). A third objective was to allow the women to continue in their roles as sustainers of their cultural past while encouraging their personal independence in the new society.

Description of Classes: Overall Structure

The classes set up for the Hmong through EWE included almost all women. They were taught to read and write in their mother tongues at the same time that they learned oral English. They were also taught some English literacy along with numeracy. The course was team-taught, making use of a Hmong translator. The learners were involved in deciding the times, locations and course content.

This paper primarily draws from my work with the Hmong people. However, some of the discussion about cultural values is based on my work with other cultural groups.

Funding. The funding came from community, provincial and federal sources. The local Waterloo County Board of Education provided space and teachers' salaries. The provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Culture covered the costs for daycare. The federal Secretary of State covered costs for administration and evaluation.

Participants. In the Hmong class the participants were drawn from the over 300 members of the Hmong community in Kitchener-Waterloo. Announcements of the class were spread within the community by word-of-mouth, and by announcements made at the local Hmong church meetings. Of the twenty people who initially registered, all but two were women. The average class size was twelve, of whom two were men--referred to as the "inadvertent" men, as the grant for the project was targeted especially for women. The classes ranged from seven to fourteen participants. Among the women there was a fairly even spread of ages ranging from about nineteen to fifty-five. The two men were about forty and sixty-five.

Of those who came to class, the two men had the lowest level of literacy in Hmong and of fluency in English. There was a wide range of abilities among the women. There were some who spoke no more than a few words of English and were neither literate in Hmong nor in English. They had only learned to copy the alphabet. Others were quite fluent in English orally, were literate in Hmong, but were not literate in English. In numeracy, one or two could add or subtract two digit numbers; one could multiply. Most of the participants in the class had learned these skills since coming to Canada.

Teachers. There were two teachers: myself, and a Hmong man, So Vang. I was responsible for teaching ESL, as well as ESL literacy and numeracy. So Vang helped by translating throughout the class. He assisted in teaching numeracy, and he taught the Hmong literacy.

Location and times, daycare provisions. From October, 1983, to May 1984, the classes were held for two hours on Friday afternoons, downtown, at Victoria School. The school was within easy access of the central bus terminal. Victoria school was known to all the participants because they had attended or were attending the community Newcomers Language Orientation Classes, held there the other four days of the week. The Friday afternoon times accommodated two or three people who worked in a factory which let out at noon on Fridays. Daycare for nursery and pre-school children was also provided at the school. From June to July, 1984, the classes were held for an additional two hours on Thursdays. Over the entire course, allowing for breaks, there were a total of 44 classes. Table 1 summarizes this information.

Table 1
A Summary of Attendance Information

Dates	Times	Days	Hours	Total Registered	Average Attendance	Total Women	Total Men
Oct. '83-May '84	1-3	Fri	2	14	9	12	2
June-July '84	1-3	Thur, Fri	2 2	17	12	15	2

Use of groups. Different combinations of groups were used in the class. Initially, So Vang and I divided the class in two groups and each group worked in Hmong literacy or ESL & ESL literacy. We exchanged groups after an hour. Later, we taught together taking turns doing each component with the group as a whole. Often pairs and small groups were used as well.

Course & Approach. Aspects of the course will be discussed in more detail in the core of the paper. The course was comprised of relevant themes which were raised by the learners or which arose when they shared information about their past culture.

The overall approach was eclectic, but relied on a problem-posing approach. This approach, like the functional-notional method, gave people language which they needed for performing specific functions. However, it went beyond the functional-notional method by encouraging the learners to be reflective about themselves, to pose questions about daily, unfair situations, and to use their newly acquired language to attempt to change those situations.

An example might be the learners coming to class and complaining that they were being evicted from their apartment because the government has not paid them their living allowance on time. The teacher might have a discussion with the class about the situation. Then, together, the learners and teacher might decide what action could be taken. The teacher would provide the language and role-playing skills to take action. The participants would then come back to class and evaluate what happened. The assumption here is that people most quickly acquire language which they urgently need.

Evaluation Methodology

In evaluating these projects there were several considerations which led me to choose a qualitative method:

1. I wanted to find a form of research whose language and process would be accessible to anyone who would read it;
2. In the past, written instruments had not been a successful way of measuring change for the Hmong. In addition, written tests required a translator to explain them;
3. The number of people involved in each class was small--at the most fourteen;
4. The length of the courses was only ten weeks, with at most four hours teaching time per week--a very short time to measure change in adult language acquisition;
5. There were too many other learning interventions (including ESL classes during the week) to have a control group;
6. Within the Hmong group, there was a cultural reluctance to be given critical or negative feedback (Hvitfeldt, 1986). The process of technical assessment was unfamiliar to them;
7. The specific areas being researched could not easily be scored or numerically tabulated;
8. The theoretical framework for teaching methods utilized a variety of approaches, but particularly was based on a problem-posing approach.

Of all the above considerations, perhaps the last bears the most relevance. Emig (1982) emphasizes the importance of using a method of inquiry which is congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of the program itself. I therefore chose a research method that also grew out of the same theoretical way of perceiving reality as the problem-solving methodologies imply. Participatory Research was such a method, because of its political, non-empirical framework, and because of its flexibility as an evaluation tool (Centre for Research & Education in Human Services, 1985; Darcy & Darcy de Oliveira, 1982; Hall, Gillette, & Tandon, 1982; Pilsworth & Ruddock, 1982; Tandon, 1982).

In traditional social science research, the researcher's role is to remain outside the group as much as possible, sustaining an objective, non-partisan relationship. In participatory or qualitative research, however, it is believed the quality of research can be improved if the researcher's role is caring and understanding so that the people will be willing to share openly with the researcher (Guba, & Lincoln, 1981;Tandon, 1982). Another term used by sociologists in qualitative research is participant observation. Norman Denzin (1970) sees participant observation as "a continuous movement between emerging conceptions of reality and empirical observations" (p.186). As a researcher, my hope was that I would be open to fresh interpretations as I gathered my data.

In the logical positivist, quantitative approach to research, the positivist looks for concrete proof of causes and effects by using written instruments which produce quantitative data. From such data statistical analyses can be made to prove relationships between given variables (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). This form of research was less suited to evaluating the Hmong than the phenomenological approach because it relies on statistical comparisons of hard facts. Much of the information gathered from the Hmong was mediated through a translator which meant it was subject to more interpretation than if the Hmong had been able to fill in written instruments themselves.

The phenomenological, or naturalistic approach, on the other hand, was more suitable for evaluating the Hmong . This qualitative approach, which relies on the researcher's perceptions or senses as the methods of research, draws its conclusions through methods other than statistical anlysis, such as open-ended interviewing and reviewing day-to-day notes kept by teachers (Bogdan &Taylor, 1975; Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, 1987; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Van Maanen, Dabbs & Faulkner, 1982). The goal in using a qualitative approach is to look for an emergent paradigm which grows out of the data collected (Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, 1987; Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Final evaluation design. The final evaluation design for the research drew on a combination of principles in participatory research and qualitative research. First, the learners were encouraged to set goals (define their reality), to evaluate their own learning (be reflective) and recommend changes (take action). Second, I used the following triad of data (Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, 1987; Faulkner, 1982; Guba & Lincoln, 1981) from which to draw conclusions for my outside audiences:

1. Interviews of learners, members of the community;
2. Journal notes, and daily lessons plans including notes written at the end of each day on what did or did not happen;
3. Comparisons of the Hmong class to three other ESL/LI literacy classes run at the same time by EWE, and other community programs.

The evaluation of the projects especially looked at changes in people's self-confidence, motivation and willingness to ask questions in their own lives outside of class. The research in this thesis draws on the evaluation and on my daily notes on each class.

Background on the Hmong

Before going on, I will present some background information on the Hmong. This information should help the reader to understand why the Hmong had difficulties in benefiting from the North American education system and why they did not readily fit into Canadian urban society .

The Hmong, also called 'Miao' by the Chinese and other S. E. Asians, are an ethnic group who come from the Northern mountainous region of Laos. The name Hmong means 'freeman' (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1981). Because they had no alphabet or writing before the 1950's, they are referred to as a pre-literate society. In the 1950's , their language was transcribed by French missionaries, using the Roman alphabet. Thus, the majority of Hmong, including most of those who came to Kitchener-Waterloo, never had been exposed visually to any form of the printed word. Most had no experience of formal education.

After 1976, tens of thousands of Hmong were given refuge in the United States. They were forced to flee from Laos because of their complicity with the United States Central Intelligence Agency in helping fight the North Vietnamese and Lao communists. During that war, the CIA recruited most of the Hmong men between the ages of 12-55. When the Royal Lao government collapsed, the Hmong fled to avoid being massacred. Because of their fifteen years of involvement in American military operations, the United States government offered them refuge (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1981).

During the period from 1979-1984, the Mennonites in Canada assisted over 350 Hmong in settling in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region of Ontario (Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, 1984). As hill people who had been engaged in farming, they were ill-suited to making the cultural adjustments required by Canadian urban society. A few of the younger Hmong had become literate in Hmong, in Laotian and somewhat literate in English before coming to Canada. However, for the majority, just sitting in a chair at a desk and holding a pencil was a totally unfamiliar experience.

Most of the Hmong in my classes had never consciously thought about formal learning. They had no experiences to fall back on or to apply to their new learning situations. These Hmong quickly lost their confidence through exposure to poor adult teaching styles in the community classes, which were their first educational experiences.

Overview (Organization of Thesis)

In the next chapter, I describe the development and use of two models for teaching people to become fluent and literate in ESL at the same time they become first language literate. The models incorporate cultural sharing and problem-posing to facilitate language learning. Two of the goals of the models are to increase the non-literates' self-confidence and to encourage social integration through careful analysis of the past and new cultures. After presenting the models, I go on in the third chapter to explore factors which affect language learning and integration. In the fourth chapter I present a conceptual framework for teaching, out of which the models emerged. In addition, I analyse several teaching methods. I conclude the thesis with recommendations for using the models for not only the Hmong, but any non-literates.

Chapter II

Creating Models for Incorporating Cultural Sharing and Problem-posing

Course Design and Evaluation

In this chapter I describe the process out of which I developed two models for incorporating problem-posing and cultural sharing in the ESL/LI literacy classroom. The first section opens with a brief discussion of the pros and cons of using the mother tongue and a translator in the classroom. The second section describes the class' and my experiences in trying to set goals and objectives and to do evaluations. The third section presents techniques used to create a learner-based course. The fourth section gives a detailed explanation of the work of Paulo Freire, on which the models are based. The chapter closes with two examples of lessons drawn from the learners' sharing of their culture and of their problems.

In the Hmong class I tried to include elements that had been missing in the other programs in which I had taught. I saw language, literacy and numeracy serving as vehicles for accomplishing broader, more significant goals which would help people throughout their lives, not just in class. These goals were to improve people's self-confidence, to affirm their individual and cultural identities, to help them to become self-reliant, to encourage them to ask questions and to try to change structures which oppressed them. I also hoped to create a joyful and playful learning environment.

Two components which were built into the course were the use of a translator and teaching bilingually, i.e. teaching L1 Literacy concurrently with ESL and ESL literacy. These components had not been tried anywhere else in the community.

Nearly all the research on teaching bilingually is about teaching children rather than adults (Feitelson, 1979; Goodman, Goodman & Flores, 1979; Rotberg, 1984). Both that research and the limited amount on adults (Haverson & Ranard, 1980; Kavale & Lindsey, 1977) are inconclusive in proving that achieving native language literacy enhances second language fluency and literacy. However, in EWE, we had some successful experiences in incorporating translators from the first cultures in the ESL classses. Our experiences bore out Stevick (1976) who says that a greater level of trust and understanding is established by using the mother tongue.

In EWE, we also concurred with those (Gudschinsky, 1973; Rivers, 1983; Laubach & Laubach, 1960; Haverson & Haynes, 1982) who claim that a greater sense of self-confidence and personal worth is gained by becoming literate in the first language. We especially believed that the act of affirming the women's own cultural identity would make them less afraid of learning the second language. Thus, teaching bilingually with a translator was integrated into these courses.

The approach was adult-oriented, starting from the learners' own experiences (Freire, 1973a, 1978; Knowles, 1980; Shor, 1980). In addition, the learners themselves were involved in processes of both setting their own goals and evaluating their own progress (Freire, 1973b; Mager, 1970; Knowles, 1980; Tough, 1981).

Setting Goals

After reading Knowles (1980), Magor (1970) and Tough (1980), I felt as if I had been terribly remiss in not having involved the class in methodically helping me in setting goals and objectives for the course. I realized I would not be able to create a learner-based program, if I did not ask them what they wanted to study.

The response to my first attempt to find out what people wanted to learn was the unanimous and general answer "English and Hmong." A little further along in the course, when I suggested a list of themes, everyone shrugged their shoulders and said "we don't know." By the end of the course I had gotten better at articulating my question and they finally understood what I meant. They were able to list reasons for learning Hmong and English which were more specifically function-oriented. They said "we want to learn English to be able to get work, go to the store, buy everything, understand numbers, get Canadian Citizenship and go to the bank. We want to learn to read and write Hmong to be able to write letters, to read letters and to read songs in church."

My experience of goal-setting with the Hmong corresponds to the research of Hvitfeldt (1986), in the United States. She found that the Hmong rely on external guidance from someone who is viewed as an authority. The Hmong in my class were looking to me, the teacher, as that authority figure.

Doing Evaluations

Evaluations of each individual's language acquisition proved to be difficult. A multitude of problems arose in trying to administer formal tests, even orally. The translator sometimes helped the participants with the answers as he asked the questions. The written tests assumed conventions with which the Hmong were not familiar such as drawing a line to connect say a numeral (1) in one column with one object (a rice mill) in another column. Also, it proved nonsensical to ask people who were used to doing everything collectively to suddenly do something individually.

Furthermore, the action of suddenly isolating people during a test was not the practice in class. The class was used to working cooperatively as a whole. Hvitfeldt's (1986) observed similar patterns of behaviour in class: "classroom achievement is never personal but always considered to be the result of cooperative effort. Not only is there no competition in the classroom, there is constant denial of individual ability" (p.70). Singling people out for testing purposes had more negative effects in destroying self-confidence than in providing new information about levels.

A qualitative form of evaluation was thus used where the participants were collectively interviewed half-way through the course in a formative evaluation, and again at the end of the course. In the first interview, neither teacher was present: a Hmong man from outside the class came. In the final interview, a Hmong woman came in. In that interview she insisted I stay to hear the answers to the questions which she translated. (The Hmong teacher was unfortunately out of town at the time of the interview.)

It became clear that participants had been in situations where they had needed to use their English to try to solve problems. One person lost her purse in a shopping mall and went to ask the manager if it had been turned in, and found it had. Some others, who missed their ride back to town one evening from a farm, found a policeman and got a ride back with him. Both situations necessitated using comprehensible English to solve problems.

In many lessons there were opportunities for people to collectively evaluate how well they accomplished actions which they embarked upon. This kind of evaluation took place in the process of engaging in dialogue, reflection, action and evaluation (Freire, 1973b; Wallerstein, 1980).

Because language learning is such a slow process, particularly for non-literate adults, we found that changes in self-confidence can often be observed before actual language acquisition. Gains in self-confidence usually lead to improved motivation and greater risk taking in language learning. The following story about one person in the class illustrates this point.

The shyest and least literate or fluent person in the class was also the oldest man. He could only mimic other people, but could not make any associations between any letter combinations and sounds in Hmong or English. One day when I had a cold he brought me some Chinese medicine. After that, I learned (through using the translator) that he was a naturopath in his own country. He had cured one person in the class of a rash which none of the doctors here were successful at treating.

In subsequent classes we made up dialogues about going to see him, and getting prescriptions from him. In addition, I arranged for a workshop with the Child Abuse Team in town so that the Hmong naturopath could explain Hmong medical treatments, some of which had been misinterpreted as forms of abuse. Through these experiences of being honoured, the man's confidence increased notably. He finally began making sound-symbol associations in Hmong words which had to do with medicine.

It was possible to determine changes in the learners' self-confidence by interviewing other people with whom they interacted daily. One such person was the daycare worker who looked after the children during our classes. When she was asked what gains in self-confidence she noticed, she replied:

> The women are not afraid to speak up. Before they were shy. There was total blankness, quietness--nothing. Now they tell me what the needs of their children are. They are more willing to initiate the conversations because they have the confidence to try speaking.

Since it turned out to be impossible to design the course by just asking people what they wanted to do, I had to find other means of finding out what situations people encountered daily. The next section describes some of the techniques I used, in conjunction with the translator, to build a participant-based course.

Discovery of a Learner-based Course

Using Listening Activities to Find Themes

One way to create learner-based lessons is to develop good listening and observing skills (Barndt, 1984; Freire, 1973a, 1973b; Wallerstein, 1983). I consciously developed listening techniques and relied on the Hmong teacher to translate the casual classroom conversation I heard. The best times for tuning into the informal sharing were before and after class. Often, the participants arrived up to half an hour early for class. The room always buzzed with chatter.

Even if the Hmong teacher had not yet arrived, I would often stop people and ask them to try to explain what they were talking about.

If I was not able to arrive early, I usually programmed some "puttering" time into the class so they could continue their conversations. I would linger over taking attendance by trying once again to pronounce everyone's name correctly--a feat I never quite mastered. As people kept talking I would ask the Hmong teacher to tell me what was being discussed.

One time the class was talking about a traffic accident which two members of the class had been in earlier that week. There was another occasion when the participants were discussing how one of their daughters had been badly burned with frying pan grease. On still another occasion, the class was discussing how they had gotten cheated the previous night when they were picking worms for a farmer. All of these situations provided themes for language lessons which were immediately relevant to the learners' lives. More will be said later about how the last of these themes was incorporated into a lesson.

Another technique which I used for listening was to set up activity centers for people who arrived before class. One center had a typewriter on which people could practice typing their names and addresses on information forms. A second center had flash cards with addition and subtraction problems. A third one had beads to use for practicing the problems written on the flash cards. The last center had picture-story books with Hmong folktales written in Hmong. These centers allowed me to circulate among the class members and chat informally with them in small groups or one-to-one, as they worked.

In comparison with the other classes taught in that school, where the women attended ESL classes in the mornings, mine must have been atypical. Above the door in one of the classrooms which we used was a sign that said "Only Speak English." I found that allowing some Hmong to be spoken in the background throughout the class was beneficial to learning. Usually, people were either helping each other or giving each other support. At other times they were discussing vital personal issues which we were able to address as a whole class. The class members thus still learned new language they needed, but more important, they used that language to attempt to solve problems, such as in the worm-picking incident where they were cheated.

Other opportunities to find out more about the women arose outside of class. Since many of the women took the bus to get around, I often encountered them when riding on it. These encounters gave me a chance to chat with them if we sat together. If they got on or off a bus I was already on, it gave me a chance to see how well they were able to communicate with the driver and other riders, as well as what sorts of difficulties they encountered.

Sometimes I would stand and chat with one of the women as she waited for a ride. One day she explained to me that there was something she wanted me to know, but the Hmong teacher had said not to tell me. I learned that she and another woman in class who I had been told were sisters, were not. In Laos, they had both been married to the same man. When they came here, they were forced to live with their families separately. After only a year or two, their husband had died from the Sudden Unexpected Death Syndrome (SUDS). SUDS is a malady which in the USA now afflicts 1 out of 4 Hmong adult men, but for which there is no explanation (Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Newsletter, 1986, p.3).

Her sharing with me about the practice of polygamy in her own country enabled me to raise the theme of marriage practices in Hmong and Canadian cultures at a later time, when people were sharing their art work with me. The opportunity arose when we were looking at an embroidery which depicted a marriage ceremony.

Using Cultural Material to Find Themes

Another way to create learner-based lessons is to find opportunities to share about each other's cultures, be it through food, music, costumes or art work

(Barndt, 1984; Duncombe et al., 1973; Price & Montgomery, 1985; Wallerstein, 1983). As suggested in the previous example, such opportunities arose in my class when the Hmong brought in their exquisite appliqué and embroidery work.

The Hmong have a long tradition of doing fine needlework. Most of the women in my class found they no longer had time to continue their crafts once they came here. However, their relatives who could not leave the refugee camps in Thailand continued doing the needlework. The relatives would send their tapestries to the refugees here to raise money for the basic supplies for which there were shortages in the camps. The Hmong women would therefore bring the artwork to class, in hopes that I would buy it or sell it for them.

I always expressed my awe and wonder at every piece brought in. The class would help me tape all the works to the walls, and everyone would gather around them to look and chat. Even the men would tenderly finger the pieces. Lively discussions ensued as people pointed to various depictions which reminded them of past customs and practices.

The embroideries were pictorial and depicted a whole range of aspects of the Hmong life in Laos, which in turn provided themes for class discussion. Some embroideries were random scenes of their rural, mountain life, with trees, monkeys, pigs, people harvesting corn or rice or poppies. Others told stories. There were many, for example, which depicted the exodus from Laos--fleeing the soldiers who were burning the villages, escaping across the Mekong River by boat, raft, inner tube, or by swimming; hiding from airplanes and helicopters. Several showed ceremonies: wedding celebrations, New Year's festivities, healing rituals. Still others illustrated Hmong folk stories, with unpolished English writing embroidered with the scenes. Two very special works showed all the peoples of Laos in their ritual costumes.

The depictions of objects which were unfamiliar to me, such as rice mills, provided me with excellent opportunities to ask the Hmong to explain their past lives and culture to me. The discussions about the objects or scenes also provided occasions for practicing a whole range of oral ESL constructions, as well as for learning how to write some of the names for the objects in Hmong.

The Problem-posing Approach of Paulo Freire

In the Introduction, under Course & Approach, I briefly described the problem-posing approach, which makes use of themes and codes. Before I can explain how codes and themes were used in the class, and why they were so important, I need to pause and give a complete description of the problem-posing approach: where it comes from, and what it means.

'Problem-posing' refers to the act of raising issues or problems (themes) which are pertinent to the learners' lives, discussing possible solutions, and then attempting to carry out the solutions. There is an important distinction being made here in calling the approach 'problem-posing' as opposed to 'problem-solving.' 'Problem-posing' implies that there may be more than one solution to a problem, and the problem may require more than one attempt to solve it (Wallerstein, 1983).

The problem-posing approach is particularly based on the work of the Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire (1970, 1973a, 1973b, 1978, 1985). Freire helped design literacy programs for illiterates in third world countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Chile, Peru, Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Guinea-Bissau. These programs all had one main goal in common: to enable peasants in oppressive situations to become literate, thereby empowering them to take action to improve conditions in their own lives, as well as those of society, in general.

Freire draws many of his ideas from Marxist theory and gives them a Christian perspective (Costigan, 1983). One of his key concepts is summarized in his term conscientization (*conscientizacao*, in Portuguese) or critical consciousness (Freire, 1973b). Conscientization is the process where people become aware of the larger society and how they relate to it. In the process, called praxis in Marxist terminology (Freire, 1973b), there is movement from being a passive recipient to being an active agent of change. Freire defines praxis as the process of conscientization involving reflection, analysis and action (1973b).

In praxis, there is no domination by the helper over the person being helped; rather, both engage in the learning process together. The goals of the process are, therefore, to enable people to

1. become aware of their own condition (reflection);
2. analyze the reasons for their condition in the context of the wider society (analysis);
3. gain tools and self-confidence to attempt to ameliorate their condition (action); and
4. reflect and analyze how effective they have been in achieving personal and social change (return to reflection again) (Freire, 1973b; 1978).

The first step in reflection is one of "naming the world" (Freire, 1973b) by which Freire means identifying people's reality through dialogue with one another. Once the given situation has been looked at and discussed with others, people can then begin analysis of the causes and cultural implications of the situation. Through these processes people learn how to engage in what is called "critical thinking" (Freire, 1973) which will enable them eventually to take action to change their own lives.

'Critical thinking' or 'critical education' are terms which come out of the school of "critical theory." Proponents of critical theory (Giroux, 1981; Hall, 1981; Shor, 1980, 1986) draw from Marxist theory in analyzing educational practices. The term 'critical' is used unconventionally to encompass the process of being analytical and reflective, and of looking at economic causes for socio-political situations.

A concrete example illustrating the critical approach to education is that of Paulo Freire's work with the peasants in Brazil who, having always worked for a landlord, assumed that it was their duty to do so, and that they didn't deserve a better life. Paulo Freire would involve these peasants in discussions and dialogue (called 'culture circles', 1973a) about the oppressive situation. Freire would help the peasants to see that they had a right to the same privileges as the landlord--food, clean water, shelter, clothes, medicine, literacy. Freire would also try to explain historically how the peasants' situation came about through colonialization, a process which benefited a wealthy ruler, and ruined the people being colonized (Freire, 1973a).

In addition to describing a critical form of education, Freire (1970) also analyzes the ideology of the dominant education systems. He uses two different metaphors to describe such a system where the learner is the passive, inactive recipient of knowledge. The first metaphor, the "banking concept of education," (Freire, 1973b) is one with which I was familiar from my teaching at the community college. According to this concept, "Education...becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor...the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits" (Freire, 1973b, p. 58).

Freire's point is that the students are put in a passive state of receiving the knowledge that others have chosen to pass on. There is no dialogue established; therefore, there is no sense of curiosity or potential for invention opened to the learners. Neither is self-assurance increased. In true education, both learner and teacher should together be engaged in a process of discovery where the teacher is not in a dominant role in relation to the learner.

It appeared to me that at the community college where I taught, the course and the teaching style there matched this "banking concept" described by Freire. I had no sense that the teachers thought of themselves as learning, together, with the students. The learners were expected to participate passively, repeating the drills they learned by rote. I was supposed to teach them phrases out of context of their lives, and which did not even make sense as English constructions. One example was the drill pattern with the pronoun 'I' accompanied by a verb, with no object: "I eat, I drink, I sit, I ring." I never did figure out when anyone would want to say "I ring."

Freire uses another image to describe a similar concept of education. In this image, the educators see themselves as "nutritionists" and they see the illiterates as being "undernourished", not because they are poorly fed (which they are) but because "they lack the 'bread of the spirit'" (1985, p. 45). Illiteracy is thus a "'poison herb', intoxicating and debilitating persons who cannot read or write" (p. 45). To teach literacy is to cure the disease of illiteracy. Freire says that "...words are transformed into mere 'deposits of vocabulary'--the bread of the spirit that the illiterates are to 'eat' and 'digest' " (p. 45).

This nutritionist image of education also fit the notions of the community college where I had taught. People were seen as being less than whole, as being afflicted with, in the case of the Hmong, two maladies: being illiterate in Hmong and unable to speak or read and write English. The act alone of providing language was thought automatically to be a remedy for all their ills, helping them to get jobs, to find housing and to get along in the new community.

Freire's literacy programs were designed to counter all the features of the "nutritionist" approach to education. Instead of controlled readings created for the learners by the teachers and delivered as lectures, the material for discussion and learning was generated from the learners themselves. Instead of an external evaluation process where the learners' progress was measured against outside criteria and norms, both learners and educators together engaged in an evaluation of their learning. The final goal of the entire process was to create a sense of awareness in people of their potential for making changes in their own lives and for eventually taking steps to improve society as well.

I was excited by this alternative model to teaching literacy. In contrast to the community college, it seemed to be one which also embodied the kinds of good adult education processes suggested by North American educators such as Coady (1937), Kidd (1973), Knowles (1973, 1978,1980) and Shor (1980). Here was a model that went beyond the language learning itself: it looked at how the learners could use their knowledge to understand where they fit into society. This model treated students as co-learners, while providing skills and encouragement for them to try to change the unfair situations in which they found themselves.

This model seemed to suit the Hmong much better than the "banking" one being used at the community college. The model had the potential for affirming their unique culture and giving them the self-confidence to survive the new, industrialized culture. As non-literates, it was likely the Hmong would end up in the worst paying jobs where they would be most likely to be taken advantage of. Thus, it seemed especially important to give them skills to attempt to solve their own problems as they arose.

Using Themes to Engage in Dialogue, Analysis, Action & Reflection

A basic element in the problem-posing approach suggested by Freire is the use of codes and themes. A code is a concrete representation of a theme which can take any form--a picture, an embroidery, a play, or a song. The code allows the learners to discuss (dialogue about) their personal and social responses to an issue because it is both concrete and removed from their actual experiences. (Wallerstein, 1983). If a good code has these qualities it will: "1) present a daily problem easily recognized by students, 2) contain the many sides of the problem, and 3) be open-ended, leaving the students to reflect on actions that are possible" (Wallerstein, 1983, p.29).

In the Hmong class, the codes were most often embroideries, but also took other forms such as dramas and role plays. In one case, the code was a miniature model of the rice mill which was represented in many of the embroideries. The class especially enjoyed demonstrating how to use the mill through mime.

After a theme has been discussed, (dialogue) and people have shared their views on it, the class collectively analyzes it (analysis). If a problem has been raised, people suggest possible solutions, which individuals will hopefully try out (action). Once they have been attempted, the class together discusses the outcome (reflection).

The final section of this chapter gives two models of how themes were used in the Hmong class. The models incorporate problem-posing and cultural sharing with engaging in dialogue, analysis, action and reflection.

The Role of Understanding Culture in Critical Education

Carrying out the "action" component--namely, making changes in the world--entails understanding one's own cultural context. One must, in Freire's terms, see oneself as an agent of change, and therefore a "cultured" person (1973a). For Freire, culture broadly means how people participate in their worlds through work, politics, education. Being 'cultured' means participating in society by engaging in the four steps of dialogue, analysis, action and reflection.

For people such as the Hmong who have left a culture behind, the process is more complicated. Being 'cultured' for them requires analyzing the culture they have brought with them (the transposed culture) as well as the new dominant culture of North America. This section discusses the role understanding culture has in language learning and in participating in a critical approach to learning.

Examining Past, Transposed & Dominant Cultures

The sharing which the Hmong people did in class through their embroideries made it clear that their current lives were made up of three primary cultures: past, transposed and dominant. For refugees like the Hmong, the memory of the past culture is a memory of a fossilized culture. A living culture is always in an evolving, metamorphic state. To be a part of a culture entails participating in the evolution. When, however, one leaves, one freezes the culture of the moment of departure in one's memory. Many of the embroideries depict scenes of the past culture such as weddings. One such scene depicts a young man asking the mother-in-law for the bride's hand. The mother-in-law beats the groom-to-be with a stick until he offers her some money. Then she gives her daughter away. The depiction of the wedding ceremony provides opportunities for discussion about the Hmong practice of having two wives.

As a result of the imposition of the new culture in Canada, neither of these two practices seem to be practiced any more. It is illegal to practice polygamy, thus many families have been broken up since they settled here, causing excessive stress for the husbands and wives. Thus, in the case of polygamy, the past culture is discontinued because it is outlawed in the dominant culture.

The transposed culture is a combination of the past culture and the new, dominant culture. Unlike the static, past culture, the transposed culture is constantly changing, according to how much people remember of the past, or how well they can recreate the past environment, e.g. how much their transposed culture is moderated by the new dominant culture. For example, in Laos, a woman needing medical treatment went to a herbalist, who provided her with remedies. In Canada, the woman seeks out her Hmong herbalist only as a last resort after western medicine (which in Canada is free to her) fails. The herbalist who used to procure his herbal remedies by going into the forest and collecting them must now take a bus to Toronto Chinatown. He must somehow negotiate finding the correct ones, even though he is unable to read the labels on the bottles. The woman, in turn, must pay a high price for his treatment, which is not paid for by government health care.

The dominant culture is the one most pervasive in the new society, represented in art, advertising, media, merchandise in stores, styles of clothing and habitats, kinds of livelihoods, and in levels of technology. Just as the transposed culture is influenced by the dominant culture, the same is true in reverse. Transposed and other cultures can influence the dominant culture, for example, the dominant non-literate Hmong culture began to change slowly when the French missionaries introduced writing in the 1950's.

Using Culture in Engaging in Problem-posing

As the Hmong class proceeded, it became clear that they were not used to being self-reflective or to engaging in analysis. Hvitfeldt (1986) found that the Hmong were used to relying on outside rather than inner frames of reference. Such reliance can be seen in their deference to the authority of the teacher. In their own culture, they would defer to the head of the household or family or clan. Hvitfeldt (1986) says that the Hmong prefer a "structure which is imposed from the outside over that which must be individually constructed " (p. 73).

There were few grounds on which the Hmong could make their decisions to accept or reject their past culture or the new dominant culture, because they had not ever been personally reflective about either one. It was unreasonable to expect them to engage in problem-posing about a theme drawn from North American culture before they had learned how to be reflective about their own culture.

The Hmong learned to become more reflective by sharing aspects of their culture with me and then comparing them with similar themes in North American culture. As a result of this sharing they also became more confident and willing to take risks in class. The cultural sharing reinforced their right to maintain their unique cultural identity and to use their mother tongue. Such sharing also gradually encouraged people to participate equally in class, instead of, as Hvitfeldt (1986) also found was usual, expecting the teacher to direct the class for them.

When we talked about the scenes on the embroideries, we were not always engaging in dialogue which led to critical analysis. However, the cultural sharing set a climate for doing so later. The exchange and sharing diminished my role as TEACHER, an authority figure, and put me on equal footing with my class. The mutual exchange and empathy created a positive environment for learning.

Critical analysis is at variance with the Hmong culture which, as Hvitfeldt (1986) points out, is hierarchical and does not encourage personal reflection. However, as the Hmong became more self-confident in engaging in problem-posing through their cultural sharing in class, they were empowered to cope in the new dominant culture in Canada.

The act of affirming the cultural identities of the learners and then inviting them to reflect on their past and new experiences gives the participants the motivation to, in Freire's words, "name *their* worlds" (1973b). This "naming of their worlds" gives the learners the confidence and esteem to engage in further dialogue where they pose questions and problems about their new dominant culture.

To be able to make changes in the world, we must first understand our own cultural contexts. We must, in Freire's terms, see ourselves as agents of change and therefore "cultured" people. We must look reflectively at how people participate in their societies through work, politics, and education. For second language literacy learners the task is double: they must reflect on both their transposed culture and the new, dominant culture.

Chapter Three of this thesis will examine how adaptation, integration or rejection of culture also affect language learning. In addition, examples will be given of how one's transposed culture can provide blocks to getting along in the new culture.

Models for Cultural Sharing and Problem-posing

This chapter will close with two models incorporating cultural sharing and critical education. The models are based on lessons which arose in my classes with the Hmong. As I mentioned in the introduction, I was not too successful in the first classes in getting the learners to set goals and determine their own course. However, I found that by employing good listening and observing skills, it was still possible both to design the course content around the issues people brought to class and eventually to involve everyone, including the shyest member of the class, in critical dialogue. These two models are summarized through a chart at the end of the chapter.

The first example builds on the cultural sharing which took place about Hmong health care. It then examines health care practices in the dominant culture and goes on to compare them with those in the transposed culture. In the last stage, questions and issues are raised about both systems, and problems are posed about coping in the dominant health care system. This example stresses cultural sharing and analysis.

The second example begins with a problem arising in the dominant culture first (instead of last, as in the previous example). It shows how it is possible to go on to comparing and contrasting cultures and end with raising other critical issues.

Model 1: Cultural Sharing, Problem-posing, Critical Education

Beginning with cultural sharing and ending with analysis, this example follows the succession of activities listed below:

Step 1	Listen and identify the theme
Step 2	Dialogue and share customs in transposed culture
Step 3	Discuss custom in dominant culture
Step 4	Compare and contrast customs in dominant and transposed cultures
Step 5	Pose problems in dominant culture
Step 6	Raise related themes, problems, possible solutions

Step 7 Discuss alternate solutions

Step 8 Design and practice language activities

Step 1: Listen and identify the theme. This particular example is based on the situation mentioned in the introduction where I learned that the shyest man (here called Neng) in the class was a naturopath, and had treated some members of the class. Before class one day, I found Neng looking at the tropical plants in the room. With the help of a translator, he identified each plant for me and its healing powers. Neng went on to explain the practice of using the wild plants which grew naturally in the Laotian forests.

Step 2: Dialogue and share customs in past culture. Other members of the class, including the Hmong teacher, shared other medical practices with me. One Hmong practice is to pinch two or three areas of the body to relieve fevers. We also discussed the use of drugs, including opium. The class reminded me of all the depictions in the embroideries of people harvesting poppies for the opium industry. They assured me that most people only used opium medicinally.

Step 3: Discuss customs in dominant culture. In the next class we discussed medical practices in our dominant, North American culture, such as having babies in the hospital, instead of at home.

Step 4: Compare and contrast customs in dominant and transposed cultures. This was an opportunity for the Hmong to share their perceptions about our medical practices. Some people thought the practice of having babies in the hospital was very strange indeed. Neng reminded me in particular that family planning could be accomplished by taking the proper herbal remedy. Neng inquired whether or not I had any children. When he found out I did not, he offered to provide me with a fertility remedy. This concern showed me the importance the Hmong place on having children and also identified child bearing as a theme to be dealt with later.

We looked at issues relating to health care in each culture, and compared and contrasted them. We discussed the roles of doctors as authority figures, the costs of medicine, the accessibility of medical people, the use of synthetic drugs vs. natural remedies, and the overall effectiveness of treatments in each culture.

Step 5: Pose problems in dominant culture. Out of the comparisons drawn in Step 4, we identified pertinent themes to be raised as questions for further discussion in the class. Samples of the questions are: What seems most important about a doctor? What do you believe helps you most? For what reasons do you go to a doctor? What did you used to do for illness in Laos which you can't do now? What problems come up in trying to use the medical system in our Canadian (dominant) culture?

Step 6: Raise related themes, problems, solutions. Next, I encouraged the class to share specific problems which they had encountered in trying to access or follow through with the health care in Canada (the dominant system). Almost all members had encountered difficulties in trying to remember how to follow the orders written on the prescriptions which they were given, particularly since they were non-literate.

Step 7: Discuss alternate solutions. We discussed ways in which people could remember instructions given to them, if they were unable to write them down. One woman had showed me at another time her system for keeping track of how many worms she picked in an evening, which avoided using numbers as numerals. Building on that idea we came up with a system for keeping track of how many times in a day and week people had taken their medicine. If the prescription said "take twice daily, before meals," we counted out seven slips of paper and divided each paper into two. We drew a bowl to represent a meal, and a face on another card to remind people to take the medicine before eating. Each time the person took a pill, she was supposed to make an **X** on the piece of paper.

We also discussed how people remembered the complicated prescriptions the homeopath gave them. The Hmong teacher said that for instructions of how much liquid to drink, people used measurements such as "fill up to two fingers' worth". Generally people relied on their memory without visual cues for such prescriptions.

Step 8: Design and practice language activities. Many language activities arose out of the dialogues around health care. They included orally practicing how to call for emergency help, how to describe the problem and to ask the doctors and nurses about caring for patients. Written exercises included filling out provincial medical insurance forms; reading exercises included learning to write and read prescription labels both in Hmong and English.

In addition, the Hmong teacher and the class helped write two dialogues about one incident (described in the introduction) where one of the women's daughters was badly burned by frying pan grease. The dialogues were practiced orally. The learners were asked to circle sound combinations which were repeated. Later, the sentences were cut up and the class in groups re-arranged them in the correct order. Finally the words (by sentences) were cut up, and the more advanced members of the class tried putting them into sentences.

The above steps took four or five classes to complete. More emphasis was placed on working out solutions to given problems in the context of the new dominant culture than the transposed culture.

Model 2: Problem-posing, Cultural sharing, Critical Discussion.

Instead of beginning with cultural sharing, this example begins with a problem which grew out of the class's sharing while the teacher took attendance. The flow of activities was somewhat different than in the first example. After the problem was shared, the class worked through potential solutions. Only towards the end of the process did the class compare and contrast how the situation would be handled in the transposed culture.

The succession of activities for Model Two was as follows:

Step 1 Raise the problem
Step 2 Design and practice exercises
Step 3 Dialogue about the situation
Step 4 Discuss possible solutions
Step 5 Take action
Step 6 Analyze the same situation in the transposed culture
Step 7 Propose alternate solutions
Step 8 Raise additional themes

The flow of activities proceeded as outlined below. This example came out of the sharing described earlier in the thesis, under the section on Listening Activities.

Step 1: Raise the problem. One day there was an especially animated discussion taking place while I was taking attendance. I asked the Hmong teacher to translate for me and learned that an incident had happened the previous night. I learned that almost everyone in the class earned money during the summer by picking worms for farmers at night. It turned out that the farmer had cheated them by emptying their cans of 500 worms into a can which really held 700. He then claimed that they had only picked 300, and paid them accordingly.

Step 2: Design and practice exercises. I abandoned my lesson plans for the day, and created a story, first in Hmong, then in English, with the class's help, based on the incident. I still incorporated most of the language functions I had planned for the day, only adjusted them to the new topic. Then members of the class acted out the story, first with puppets and then just by themselves.

Step 3: Dialogue about the situation. More discussion took place around the problem. The participants elaborated on the hardships of picking worms at night in the rain and then coming home to get the children ready for school. After the children were out the door, the adults came straight to their summer school classes which were for four hours in the morning, before my class. The learners described how tired they were by the time they got to my class (no wonder I had to take some to the nurse's station everyday to sleep!).

Step 4: Discuss possible solutions. Questions were raised about what could be done to correct the injustice. Possible solutions were worked out, and a new story was created, in English only this time, incorporating old phrases from the previous story. An ending was added, providing a possible solution decided upon by the class together. The final story looked like this:

We went to pick worms.
The farmer said, "It's hot today, isn't it?"
Chong said, "Yes, it is."
"Here are 500 worms," said Chong.
"No," said the farmer, "you only have 300."
Chong went away.
"The farmer was unfair," she said, "He cheated us."
Xob said, "We will take him to court."

Step 5: Take action. The class members, in conjunction with their own community, together decided how to follow through on the above question by taking the farmer to Small Claims Court. Later, after the process was completed, the class reported back what the outcome was. In this case it was months later. It turned out that the farmer had to pay everyone back whom he had cheated.

Step 6: Analyze the same situation in transposed culture. Another discussion for which we did not have time would have been to find out how the situation would have been handled in Laos. We might then have compared and contrasted how different societies deal with injustice.

Step 7: Propose alternate solutions. A further discussion, which we also never had time for, would have been to talk about the decision to go to Small Claims Court. Other options in the dominant culture could have been explored

(Community Mediation Services, refusing to work for the farmer again, etc.). We could have then compared the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Step 8: Raise additional themes. We raised a few topics relating to the incident for further critical analysis. These touched on the learners' lives. Though we didn't have time to pursue them all, some of the broader themes which related to this incident were the rights of workers, the discrepancy in pay between workers and employers, and health hazards of picking all night in the rain. The themes which were used served as starting points for other lessons, where the eight-step sequence was begun anew.

These eight steps in Model Two follow the design of Freire's culture circles where people engage in open dialogue about a problem in the community. In the above situation, the problem arose in the dominant culture; thus, it was not a situation where there was a conflict between the transposed and dominant culture. More emphasis was therefore placed on working out the solutions in the context of the dominant culture rather than the transposed culture.

A Heuristic for Integrating Themes with Cultural Sharing and Problem-posing

The previous two models illustrate how to incorporate cultural sharing and problem-posing with language learning. The goal here is to teach people ESL and L1 literacy through raising themes which are pertinent to their own lives. The language learning takes place as people explore their cultural identities and consider their daily problems.

Wallerstein (1983) summarizes the reasons for integrating culture and problem-posing with teaching language functions:

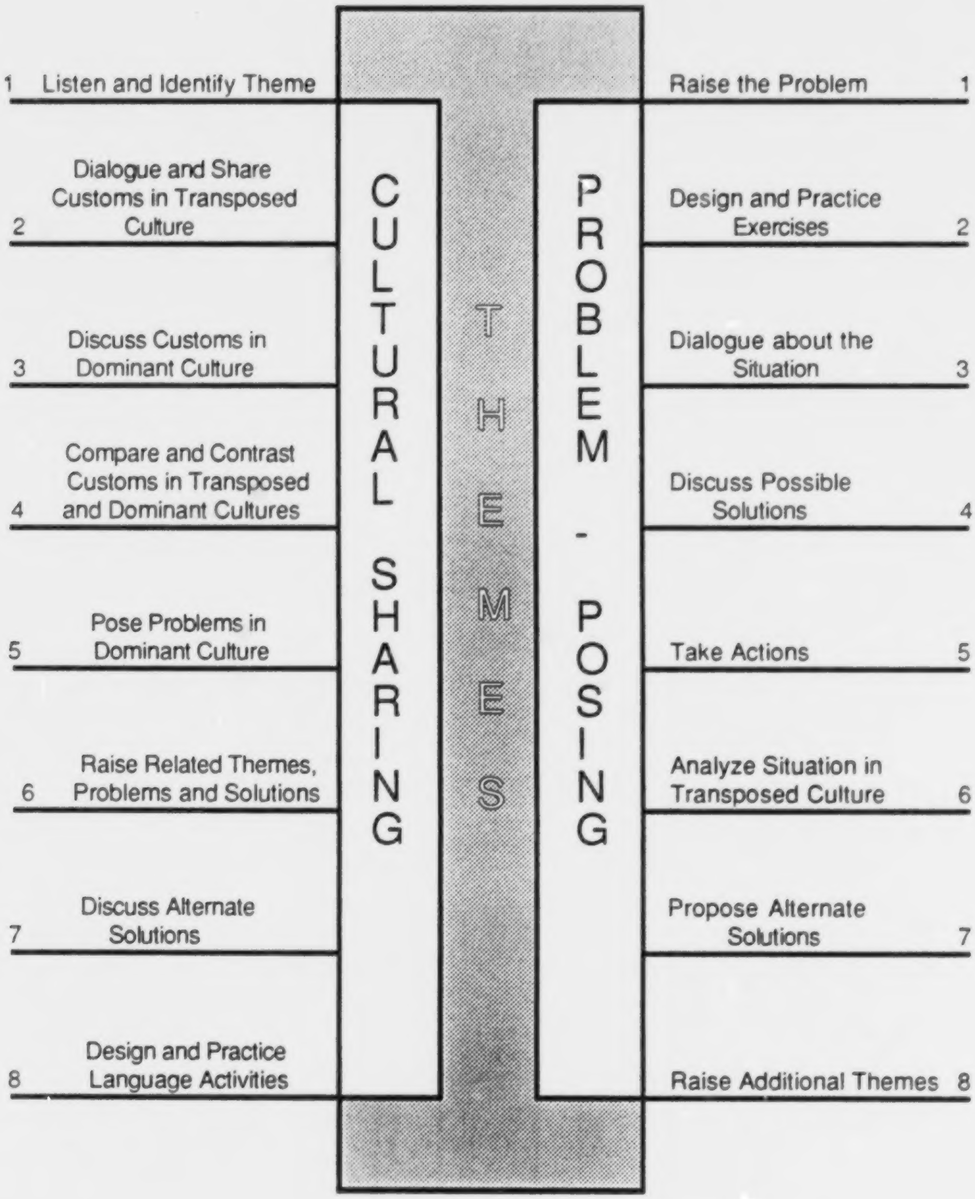
> Problem-posing allows the students and teachers to explore life situations, create hope about change, and use their imaginations to build the link between the classroom English and the community...A problem-posing approach offers them a chance to redefine their culture and gain mastery

over their lives (p. 11).

When I was at the community college, learning was seen as memorizing rote patterns and miscellaneous grammar and vocabulary. The teacher's role was to 'feed' people the patterns (Freire, 1985). However, when I incorporated the critical approach illustrated by the above two examples, I discovered that real learning is not a process of feeding people. Real learning takes place when the grammar and vocabulary put together in a sentence enables the learner to cope in a new cultural setting. This 'coping' means asking questions, understanding the new cultural context, and finally, taking risks to change unfair conditions at work or in the community.

My learning from these classes was that the ideal approach of language teaching integrates real life exercises involving reading, writing, pronunciation, speaking etc. with the themes which emerge in the personal and cultural sharing. The last section in this chapter presents a heuristic, or visual representation of two models for integrating themes with cultural sharing and problem-posing. These models are derived from Models I and 2 above.

The Heuristic. The heuristic in Figure 1 summarizes the eight steps outlined in both the above examples for using a critical approach to language learning. Both examples begin by raising themes which are discovered through the kinds of listening activities outlined earlier in this chapter. Thus, the 'Themes' are the common integrating factors (the capital 'I' in the center of the rectangle) for the two approaches of either Cultural Sharing (contained on the left side of the rectangle) or Problem-posing (contained on the right side of the rectangle). Both approaches have the common goals of 1. engaging people in looking critically at their transposed culture and dominant culture; 2. raising related themes or problem and propose solutions; and 3. to practice language learning activities.


1 Listen and Identify Theme
2 Dialogue and Share Customs in Transposed Culture
3 Discuss Customs in Dominant Culture
4 Compare and Contrast Customs in Transposed and Dominant Cultures
5 Pose Problems in Dominant Culture
6 Raise Related Themes, Problems and Solutions
7 Discuss Alternate Solutions
8 Design and Practice Language Activities
CULTURAL SHARING
THEMES
PROBLEM - POSING
Raise the Problem 1
Design and Practice Exercises 2
Dialogue about the Situation 3
Discuss Possible Solutions 4
Take Actions 5
Analyze Situation in Transposed Culture 6
Propose Alternate Solutions 7
Raise Additional Themes 8

Fiqure 1. A heuristic : Integrating themes with cultural sharing and problem-posing

Summary

The main goal in this chapter was to describe how I incorporated three elements in my teaching: using the mother tongue to teach LI literacy, using a translator to facilitate inter-cultural communication; and incorporating cultural sharing and problem-posing in teaching ESL/LI literacy. Because the problem-posing approach derives from the work of Paulo Freire, special attention was given to his concept of *conscientization* and its role in ESL teaching.

The heart of the chapter and the thesis are the two models which show how to incorporate cultural sharing and problem-posing. The first example builds on the cultural sharing which took place about Hmong health care. This example stresses cultural sharing and analysis.

The second example begins with a problem arising in the dominant culture first (instead of last, as in the previous example). It shows how it is possible to go on to comparing and contrasting cultures and end with raising other critical issues. The next chapter will give fuller attention to how culture affects language learning and integration.

Chapter III

Exploring What Affects Motivation in Second Language Learning and Integration into a New Culture

I will begin this chapter by trying to answer questions I consistently have had with respect to working with non-literates. These questions fall under two areas: motivation and adult learning theory; and culture and its effects on learning. Next, I will examine how motivation in learning, and integration into a new culture are dependent on fulfilling certain basic needs. I will describe how the ability to fill these needs is related to Cross's (1981) "chain-of-response" model.

My experiences working in the community with other refugee groups besides the Hmong helped me to see what an important role culture plays in getting along in new learning environments and the society at large. Thus, I will conclude by drawing on these experiences to give examples of how one's transposed culture can provide blocks to getting along in the new culture.

The Relation of Motivation and Culture to Adult Learning

My experience at the community college raised several questions which I considered as I did research for, designed and implemented the ESL/LI literacy project. The questions fell under two broad areas: motivation and adult learning theory, and culture and its affects on learning.

With respect to motivation I asked:

1. What motivates the non-literate ESL learners; what affects their motivation?
2. What light do adult education theories shed on motivation and the learning process?
3. What educational theories best meet the needs of the non-literate?
4. What methodologies are most appropriate?

With reference to culture, I asked:

1. What affect does culture have on learning?

2. What enhances or inhibits cultural integration?
3. What adult learning theory takes culture into consideration?
4. How can culture be used to facilitate language learning and cultural adapation?

After working with the Hmong, I was able to answer at least partially each of the first questions relating to motivation and culture; namely, what motivates the non-literate ESL learner and what affect culture has on learning. I found that there was a correlation between motivation and culture, although some aspects of motivation were independent of culture. Being motivated to learn a new language as an ESL non-literate was dependent on having a desire to fulfill these eight objectives:

1. providing for basic needs and newly acquired needs
2. gaining self-confidence
3. being esteemed by one's family or community
4. setting goals--envisioning a future
5. sharing one's culture with others
6. understanding the new culture
7. adapting and integrating into the new dominant culture
8. asserting one's rights and working to change society.

These eight objectives can be organized thematically by looking at the roles of four areas in facilitating learning: a) needs reduction, b) goals and evaluations, c) cultural integration, d) conscientization. This chapter will consider these four areas by drawing on research in the fields of psychology, adult education, critical theory and ESL theory. The chapter will conclude by summarizing answers to the questions outlined at the outset of this introduction about motivation and culture.

Reducing Basic Needs to Enhance Adult Learning

There were a few people in my Hmong class who lacked motivation to learn. When I went back to looking at research related to motivation, I realized that theories relating to needs reduction provided some helpful insights into the

Hmong's learning blocks. "Needs reduction" refers to reducing the time spent engaging in the essential activities of providing for safety, food, shelter, clothing and affection. Once these basic needs are satisfied, one is more likely to want to fulfill other needs relating to personal growth (Knowles, 1980; Maslow, 1962).

The basic human needs have been defined in various ways by world assemblies, psychologists and educators. The United Nations (1948) adopted and proclaimed a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In thirty articles, this declaration affirms fundamental human rights, without any distinction to race, religion, sex, political persuasion or economic or social class. The declaration details inalienable personal, family and state rights. Those for whom these rights are fulfilled will no longer require their basic needs to be met, and will be free to pursue socially meaningful lives

Some of these rights go beyond guaranteeing basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and safety. The articles which are most relevant to adult educators affirm personal rights (#1-5; #23-27) presume the importance of satisfying the needs of personal liberty (#3, 18, 19), safety (#5, 9, 12, 13, 14), health, food, clothing, housing (#17, 25), employment (#23), rest and leisure (#24), education (#26), participation in cultural life of community (#27), participation in the political life of the community (#20, 21, 29) (United Nations Office of Public Information, reprinted 1973).

Subsequent definitions of basic needs echo those outlined by the United Nations. Maslow (1954) defined the needs in terms of a hierarchy of five tiers, beginning with those most basic to survival and ending with those which relate to being fulfilled emotionally and psychologically. He graphically represents this hierarchy as a pyramid shown in Figure 2. The first two tiers at the bottom of the hierarchy correspond to the United Nations articles asserting the rights to personal liberty, safety and health, food, clothing, housing.

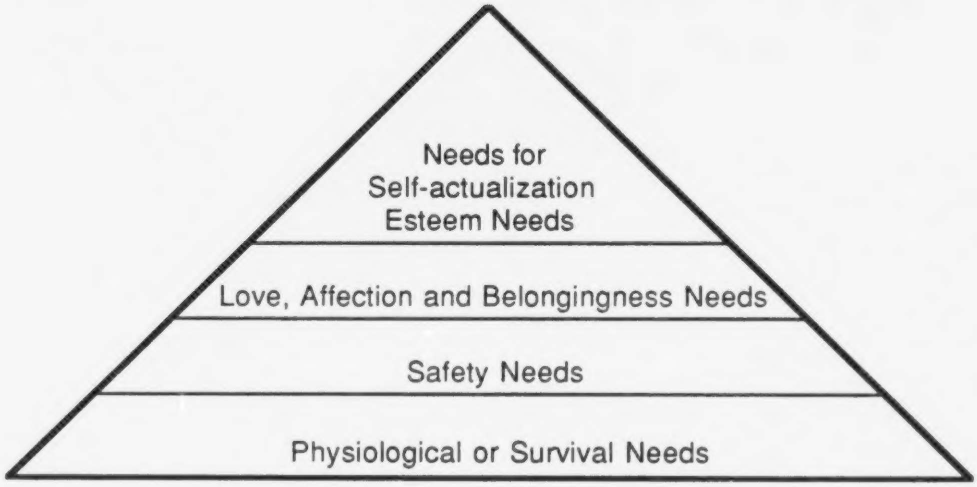

Needs for
Self-actualization
Esteem Needs
Love, Affection and Belongingness Needs
Safety Needs
Physiological or Survival Needs

Figure 2. Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of human needs

Originally Maslow (1954) believed that a person must satisfy the needs in each tier before embarking on satisfying successive needs at the top of the hierarchy. Later, (1962) Maslow revised his hypothesis to say that the needs did not have to be met in a stepwise progression.

According to Maslow's theory (1954), the ideal, balanced state for any adult is to be curious and to seek knowledge. That process, which takes place in the fifth tier, can lead to a self-actualization or a `"peak" experience (1954). For self-actualization to happen, the previous tiers of needs must be met first. A person struggling to find food, shelter or clothing is not as likely to have time to be contemplative or curious as one for whom those needs are not a concern.

In the U. N. Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as well as in Maslow's (1954) hierarchy, "safety," "a sense of belonging," and "self-esteem" are designated as basic needs. The importance of being safe (free from persecution and danger) and with loved ones cannot be overlooked. Those people who have been traumatically uprooted from their culture and separated from their family have so much on their minds that often they can not take advantage of schooling. In ESL classes, I often saw the learners (not only Hmong, but also Vietnamese and Central Americans) who were so traumatized by their former experiences that they had difficulty in concentrating and focussing: their minds wandered constantly, and sometimes they did not seem to be aware of where they were.

Chan (1984), Cohon (1980) and Nicassio (1985) have reported on the special adjustment difficulties of Southeast Asian refugees who were uprooted without adequate mental preparation time for making a transition into a new culture. These researchers have examined the effects of such trauma on the immigrants' psychological adjustment to their culture and learning environments. Chan (1984) and Nicassio (1985) identify three major causes for poor adjustment. First, the conditions of leaving are so traumatic that there is no time to anticipate--dream about or envision--the new cultural setting. Second, the loss of family members or dissolution of the family causes severe stress and anxiety for a people who existed not as individuals but as members of a family. Third, there is a loss of self-esteem which arises from losing their professional status, from being undervalued in their employment, from having to rely on the children as translators, and from role reversals between husbands and wives.

I saw examples of all these psycho-social difficulties in my classes. One woman, who had come with the rest of her family and was pregnant, had left a teenage daughter back in Laos. She was constantly distracted with her worry and anxiety about her daughter, and was unable to concentrate or be attentive. She also suffered from severe bouts of depression.

The Hmong naturopath in my class (referred to in Chapter Two) suffered from loss of self-esteem when he came to North America, particularly when he found it difficult to practice his healing arts. Without a sense of self-worth and self-confidence, it was difficult for him to engage in the risk-taking demanded by learning a new language.

These examples from my own class bear out the necessity of satisfying the basic needs outlined in Maslow's hierarchy (1954). Moskowitz (1980), Rivers (1983) and Stevick (1976) also emphasize the importance of making sure that the learners' lowest levels of needs--physiological and safety--are met before they take classes. These three ESL educators believe that only then can the teacher begin to help the learner meet successive needs.

The third level of Maslow's hierarchy--"love, affection, belongingness" (1954) --are other needs which adult ESL educators consider as crucial to learning. Stevick (1976) underlines the importance of building trust between the student and teacher, as well as the importance of the teacher being perceived as a role model and source of information. Madsen and Bowen (1978), claim that second language ability is neither dependent on motivation nor effort but rather on empathy. Expressing empathy is an important way of reducing adults' anxieties and their fears of failure (Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1978, 1980; Madsen & Bowen, 1978).

Through the process of listening to the Hmong class and in engaging in cultural sharing, I found that I had to do more than just show empathy. I needed to create an environment where the class members were willing to take risks. To do so I had to be friendly and interested; to have reasonable expectations of the learners, provide chances for success; to be sensitive to individual differences and perspectives and I had to be attuned to different learning styles. Other educators (Charnley & Jones, 1979; Madsen and Bowen, 1978; Rivers, 1983; Wlodkowski, 1985) concur in believing that the optimum learning environment is one where a teacher displays these preceding traits.

In the first two years the Hmong's physiological needs (food, shelter, clothing) were provided for through sponsorship by the Canadian government and churches. Thus, their needs resided in the third, fourth and fifth tiers of Maslow's hierarchy. My work with the Hmong indicated that the most important need of all to satisfy was that of building up the individual's self-confidence and self-esteem (tier 4). Once I found a way of honouring the naturopath, who was also the least literate in his first language and slowest in oral English, his self-confidence improved along with his fluency in English.

Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) confirm these findings about self-confidence and self-esteem. They say that the person who is secure and self-confident is more successful as a language learner. According to them, "two measures of self-confidence are anxiety and extroversion" (1982, p.75). Lower levels of anxiety along with greater extroversion have been shown to be the personality characteristics most often associated with successful second-language acquisition. Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) say that self-confident people are less likely to fear rejection than those with high anxiety levels. Thus, self-confident people are willing to risk more and are less self-conscious, as was the case with the Hmong naturopath.

Once learners have met the four lowest levels of needs, but particularly that of building self-confidence and self-esteem, they are freer to move into the highest (fifth) tier of participating in self-actualizing experiences. The exercise of trying to become first language literate, along with ESL fluent and literate, can be one of embarking upon a self-actualizing experience. Rivers (1983) describes the experience of being in the fifth tier as the participation in self-directed learning which itself is a product of "self-realizing motivation"(1983, p. 148).

There is a key element which is not explicitly represented in the hierarchy, but which facilitates movement between the different tiers: knowledge. Knowledge reduces anxiety and promotes general growth. Freire (1970, 1973a 1973b, 1985) and other critical educators (Giroux, 1981; Shor, 1980, 1986) would agree with Maslow (1962 and Knowles (1978, 1980), in saying that one way of transforming anxieties produced by the unfamiliar into being manageable, predictable and harmless is to know and understand them, and then take action to reduce them.

Knowledge and action thus go together--they are intrinsically part of one another: "All those psychological and social factors that increase fear will cut our impulse to know; all factors that permit courage, freedom and boldness will thereby also free our need to know "(Maslow, 1962, p. 64). How knowledge can be used to change one's life will be discussed further at the end of this chapter in the section which looks at critical theory.

This discussion of needs so far has only dealt with the needs seen as essential to survival, as hypothesized by the United Nations (1948), Maslow (1954) and Knowles (1980). There is, however, another set of needs which influences learning: they are the 'perceived needs.' These needs come along with being part of a new dominant culture. In North America, examples of such needs are owning a television, automobile, computer, washing machine, vacuum cleaner; or getting an education, becoming a Canadian citizen. While not absolutely essential for survival, the desire to fulfill these needs can stimulate growth and change, and either lead to self-actualization or frustration.

What I saw happen with some of the Hmong over the five-year period from 1979-1984 was an initial eagerness to learn and acculturate, partly stimulated by the desire to acquire materialistic possessions. People were motivated to learn ESL in order to get a job so they could thereby afford the material goods and provide for their children. Their motivation and psychological stability and happiness grew until they got their jobs and began earning money.

Westermeyer, Neider & Vang (1984) observed a similar phenomenon in doing research on acculturation and mental health of the Hmong in Minneapolis over a two year period. They found that a "...general increase in mental health was positively correlated with more time in the U.S., more job training, more English language training and acquisition of such material goods as televisions and cars" (1984, p. 90).

I noticed that after the Hmong had worked for about a year, their motivation for continuing to study ESL began to decline. For one reason, they no longer had much time nor energy to attend classes, even when the classes were offered on-site, at their workplace, at the end of the day. More significantly, though, the Hmong had begun to acquire the possessions which had before been a source of motivation for learning ESL. That is, they had managed to get jobs where they did not need English, but could manage to earn enough money to acquire the goods.

At least a few of the Hmong began to realize that they would never be able to fulfill their aspirations of getting better jobs, owning homes, or getting a full education to become a professional. These Hmong saw themselves as a 'sacrifice' generation: they lived for the sake of their children who would fulfill the unmet dreams of the first generation Hmong. Once the first generation Hmong gave up on achieving their own personal dreams and goals, they reached a plateau in their drive to learn; or, they even declined in both their personal growth and overall acculturation in the new dominant society.

This pattern of the Hmong roughly fits Cross's (1981) "chain-of-response" model. In this model, Cross identifies six elements which contribute to the adult's motivation to learn. These six elements are inter-related and affect one another in a "chain-of-response:" 1) self-evaluation, 2) attitudes about education, 3) importance of goals and expectation that participant will meet goals, 4) life transitions, 5) opportunities and barriers, 6) information, and 7) participation (p. 124).

Cross assumes that participation in learning is more complicated than satisfying basic needs successively; rather, learning is the result of a chain of many responses. These responses involve being personally reflective and setting goals, but also entail encountering societal barriers. Ultimately, the learning endeavor requires the adult to overcome these barriers and to continue participating in the wider society. Cross's theory allows for consideration of newcomers for whom the past experiences, current obstacles and opportunities are all influential in the learning endeavor in varying proportions.

The "chain-of-response" model fits the situation of the Hmong who had formerly been in my ESL /L1 literacy class and subsequently had gotten jobs in a factory where they sewed on leather steering wheel covers. The longer they did this work, the more their motivation for learning seemed to decline. Initially, they had wanted to learn English to be able to get hired and then get along in their new jobs, (corresponding to links 1, self-evaluation and 3, setting goals in Cross's chain). As they got accustomed to doing the job without English, their motivation declined. Even when conditions seemed unfair, they lacked the information (link 6 in the chain) to know how to go about improving conditions (link 7, participation). Since many of the Hmong thought it was more important for their children to become educated (links 2, attitudes about education, and 4, life transitions), they did not have the desire and energy to come to the ESL classes set up for them after work at the factory.

Cross's chain-of-response theory (1981) makes explicit the importance of setting goals and doing evaluations as a means for growth and change. The theory also recognizes that learning does not follow a step-wise progression. It is, instead, a process which is influenced by many variables which includes satisfying the basic needs as well as overcoming other obstacles.

Encouraging Self-directed Learning by Setting Goals and Doing Evaluations

Other adult educators besides Cross (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Freire,1973a, 1973b, 1978; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1978, 1980; Price & Montgomery, 1985; Tough, 1967; Wallerstein, 1983) emphasize the importance of setting goals with learners and of doing evaluations as a means for the people to become self-directed learners. In the first programs where I taught (the newcomer orientation courses and the community college) these elements were not really built into the program. There was testing at the community college to determine level, but it did not determine real language learning, nor did it involve allowing the learners to evaluate themselves. Thus, when I set up the ESL/L1 Literacy classes, I decided to try to incorporate these components.

Initially, I failed in getting people to participate in setting goals or in being self-reflective. As the courses progressed, however, people grew to understand what both processes meant. Just the act of thinking of where they might use English challenged them in some cases to try it outside of class. Thus, the acts themselves of setting goals and reporting back how well they had done provided motivation for learning. I discovered that engaging in these processes constitutes learning in and of itself, apart from, but necessary for, language learning. For these reasons, reflection, goal-setting, and analysis figure into the two models for engaging in problem-posing and cultural sharing, presented at the end of Chapter Two.

I also discovered that being attuned to people's preferred learning styles was very important. In general, the Hmong with whom I worked had only had a brief previous experience of hierarchical-style teaching, and that was at the community college. My Hmong class seemed open to the participatory style of teaching, outlined in Chapter Two.

However, in some of the other settings in which I had taught, I had mixed classes, where the expectations of student-teacher roles were very different. Most of the Vietnamese expected the teacher to be the authority, and they, in turn, assumed a passive role. This parallels Nicassio's (1985) and Hvitfeldt's (1986) research which shows the importance of understanding what Southeast Asians expect of a teaching situation. They point out that teachers in Southeast Asia would have assumed authoritarian roles.

This style of teaching fits Freire's "banking model" (1973) much more closely than the problem-posing approach. I, therefore, found it necessary to use a transitionary approach which incorporated some of the aspects which they preferred from the "banking concept," namely, drill and memorization, while I 'sneaked in' some participatory elements which would lead to problem-posing. By continuing to teach in a style which was familiar to the Southeast Asians, I was able to decrease the anxiety produced by being in a new learning situation.

It was as I engaged in this transitional approach that I also gradually introduced self-evaluation and goal-setting. Incorporating these two components slowly, along with a non-hierarchical style, is in keeping with Cross's assumption (1981) that participation itself is a activity which has to be learned. The teacher must assist the learner in the overall process of becoming motivated and self-directed.

To encourage people to be self-reflective about their own progress, we had two informal evaluations. Half-way through the course we had a formative evaluation whose purpose was to give me, the teacher, feedback on my teaching, as well as to give the class a chance to think about what they wanted from the course. At the end of the course, we had another summative evaluation. Qualitative in nature, both evaluations were conducted in Hmong and were designed to stimulate self-reflective conversation.

Throughout the course, we had smaller evaluations which took the form of carrying out or role playing a specific language function, such as asking the plant supervisor for more work to do. In addition, I asked the Hmong to describe situations where they tried to use their English in the community to solve problems. Some of these experiences were already described in the Introduction. One incident I referred to was where the woman who lost her purse went to the shopping mall manager to see if it had been turned in. Another was when the Hmong who missed their rides back to town from the farm went to a policeman for assistance.

The acts of engaging in these discussions provided opportunities for my class participants to be self-reflective about their learning in ways they never had been before. Recognizing times where they had been challenged to use English, or being asked to use it for specific functions, provided extra motivation for working hard at acquiring the new second language.

Although it was often hard to recognize specific improvements in language syntax, the processes of goal-setting and evaluating provided opportunities to notice people gaining self-confidence, which in turn led to them taking greater risks in practicing the new language. The Introduction mentions how much change the daycare worker noticed in the Hmong when they came to pick up their children. Women who had never uttered more than a word or two now were willing to try to engage in conversation.

Goal-setting and evaluation are processes which constantly feed back and forth into each other, in a spiralling motion. Freire (1973b), Kidd (1973), Knowles (1980) and Wallerstein (1983) see the process as entailing these four steps: 1) **Awareness, reflection**--discovering the problems and goals; 2) **Analysis**--identifying gaps in skills or knowledge needed to attain goals; preparing to search for a solution; 3) **Action**--participating in a learning process based on personal experience and community need; attempting to produce a solution; 4) **Awareness, reflection**--evaluating success of solution, re-diagnosing needs for learning or problem-solving.

The two models presented in Chapter Two embody all of these components. Each time people attempted to follow through with one of these steps, they were challenged to grow and learn, thereby beginning the process of becoming self-directed learners. As the participants completed each successive step they gained more self-confidence. The more confidence they acquired, the more easily they were able to fulfill the need of being esteemed by their family and the community.

Cultural Integration

Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of human needs does not give specific consideration to any aspects of culture, yet culture influences every one of the needs, from those relating to survival all the way up to self-actualization. The traumatic effect of leaving a culture was already briefly noted (Chan, 1984; Cohon, 1980; Nicassio, 1985) in relation to Southeast Asians. Such trauma makes it difficult for the refugees to fulfill their needs in the third tier of love, affection and a sense of belonging. Clement & Kruidenier (1983), Krashen (1982), Schumann (1975) and Stern (1983) see acculturation as a primary variable in the role of motivation in second language learning. In this section, I will draw on my own work with the Hmong along with current research to examine ways in which culture plays a role in a newcomer's motivation and ability to learn ESL, and to integrate into the life of the new community.

Factors Influencing Language Learning and Social Integration

As I worked with the Hmong, I searched for ways in which I could better understand and assist in their social integration and acculturation. Social integration or acculturation generally refers to the coming together of two unique cultural groups, and the changes that come about in either group as a result of their contact with each other (Berry, 1980; Nicassio, 1985). In this section, I will use both terms to refer to the ability of someone with a transposed culture to get along in a new, dominant culture. However, I will not examine the changes which come about in those people in the dominant culture as a result of their contact with people who came from another culture.

Through my work with the refugees, I have seen that six main conditions and attitudes affect how well they adjust to or acculturate in the new society. They are 1) psychological stress, 2) past formal or informal education, 3) reasons for and circumstances for leaving, 4) desire to stay permanently or return home, 5) influence of the transposed culture, 6) interference of transposed cultural patterns with those of the dominant culture. I will elaborate on each of these conditions or attitudes throughout this section.

Psychological stress. Stress and anxiety caused by former circumstances have already been mentioned as creating blocks to learning. Schumann (1975) distinguishes three types of disorientation the newcomer initially faces in a new cultural setting: "language shock, culture shock and culture stress" (p. 211), which all create stress and anxiety.

The first type, **language shock**, arises from the constant stress of trying to find and use the correct words to reflect one's ideas. When I taught ESL for five hours a day at the community college, by the end of the day it seemed that most of the people were experiencing language shock from having to use English initially for so many consecutive hours. In the Hmong class, this stress was alleviated by using a Hmong teacher to translate ideas too sophisticated for the level of the class's English.

The second type, **culture shock**, is experienced when one has lost the usual repertoire for solving problems and coping. This state can produce fear, anxiety and depression, which hampers motivation to learn the new language (Nicassio, 1985). The purpose of the models which were used in the Hmong class (presented in Chapter Two) was to help people cope with such culture shock by giving them a new repertoire of coping skills.

The third type of disorientation is **culture stress**, which results in loss of identity. Culture stress describes the condition of the Hmong naturopath who lost his sense of identity when he came to Canada.

These three disorientations can create a negative mental state which interferes with the learners' ability to encounter the new culture. The purpose of incorporating cultural sharing in a class is to address or overcome the stress caused by these disorientations.

Past education. All those refugees who had schooling prior to arriving to Canada had an easier time in their adjustment and their learning of ESL than those who were illiterate in their own language, with no prior schooling. Reder and Cohn (1984) in their work with Hmong people in the United States also found that the more schooling the Hmong had, the easier it was to acculturate. Those with schooling seem to have a greater sophistication--a wider exposure to different life styles (perhaps from changing from a rural environment to an urban one). Also, those who had opportunities to participate in education generally already had their basic needs met, so survival did not take all their energy.

Those who are literate in their own language are always able to learn more quickly than people like the Hmong who have never held a pencil, nor had any exposure to print, nor experience of sound-symbol correlation (Bell & Burnaby, 1984; Haverson & Ranard, 1980).

Reasons for and circumstances of leaving. Other causes of learning difficulties which are often overlooked in language classes are the conditions under which the immigrants left their homeland. In this discussion the term 'immigrants' will be used to include both emigrants and refugees. 'Emigrants' refers to people who have left of their own accord: they have chosen to migrate. They would have had time to psychologically prepare for leaving their families and country. They would also have known ahead of time where they were going, thus giving them a chance to visualize their new situation.

'Refugees,' on the other hand, refers to people who have had to flee their original homes under duress at a moment's notice. They may end up in refugee camps before ever leaving their own country. There, they are like prisoners in their own country. Neither those who have left immediately nor those in camps would have had time to say goodbyes to friends and family. Nor would they have had time to envisage their new cultural environment. As Nicassio (1985) points out in relation to Southeast Asian refugees, they are not psychologically or emotionally prepared for the change.

Desire to stay or return; attitudes toward dominant culture. The immigrants' long-term goals and ability or willingness to integrate are related to their status as refugees or emigrants. Those who do not ever expect to return home usually adapt more easily than those who plan to go back as soon as possible. Their adaptation is easier for those who plan to stay because it is not as crucial for them to maintain their transposed culture. Immigrants who want to have positive relations with the dominant society can be categorized as seeking **integration** (Berry, 1980; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) or **assimilation** (Berry, 1980; Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982). **Integration** means maintaining one's cultural integrity while participating in the broader dominant society. **Assimilation** refers to giving up one's cultural identity entirely, and becoming part of the dominant society.

A second group of immigrants is made up of people who do not want to have positive relations with the dominant society and for whom language learning is therefore difficult or impossible. These people can be categorized as taking part in **rejection** (Berry, 1980) or **deculturation** (Berry, 1980). **Rejection** means a self-imposed separation from the rest of society. **Deculturation** involves rejecting both the past culture and the new dominant culture. Immigrants who end up in this state are out of cultural or psychological contact with either the old or new society and end up being nearly totally marginalized and alienated (Berry, 1980). Some of those who reject the dominant society and plan to return as soon as possible tend to adapt only so far as it enables them to earn a living and bide time for their planned trip home. Because people in this second group always have their mind on returning, they often do not perceive the need for understanding the new dominant culture or trying to learn the second language. Frequently, the political situation is such that practically speaking, it will be nearly impossible for them ever to return; however, they will not admit this fact.

A small proportion of those people who do recognize the political impossibility of ever returning still reject the dominant society. They do not wish to acculturate by learning the new language or participating in the community.

In Kitchener-Waterloo, all the refugees whom I met fell into one of these three categories of acculturation: integration, assimilation and rejection. No one fit the category of deculturation. The majority of people (including the Hmong) wanted to integrate, thus maintaining their own culture, while also participating in the new culture. Surprisingly enough, one sign of the Hmong's willingness to integrate was their interest in learning Hmong literacy. Reder and Green (1983) in their research of Hmong in Minnesota, also found that "the acquisition of native language literacy in Hmong may be seen not as an indicator of interest in cultural maintenance, but of openness to change if not assimilation" (p.27-28). The Hmong had thus obviously made a conscious decision to become part of the new culture, but wanted to ensure retaining the linguistic heritage.

Affect of Transposed Culture on Acculturation. The degree of similarity between the transposed and dominant cultures also has a bearing on language acquisition and integration. Those immigrants coming from cultures where the language is tonal (all Southeast Asians) and the alphabet is different (Laotian, Chinese, Arabic) seem to have the most difficulty in adjusting to the Roman alphabet and Western sound systems (Bell & Burnaby, 1984). Other aspects of culture influence adaptation as well: learning styles, attitudes towards authority and group participation, roles of women, ways of organizing and expressing thoughts (for example, starting with the main point first, as in Western practice, or making the main point last, as in Asian, Arabic and some African countries' practice).

Those people coming from technological societies where many of the customs and values are similar to those in dominant Canadian society have the easiest time getting along here, and learning the new language. Level of education is very important in adaptation. Newcomers who were formerly professionals in Eastern European countries, U.S.S.R., or Central and South American countries usually get along well and are able to get reasonably high paying jobs after five or more years. In Kitchener-Waterloo, some of these people have gotten jobs related to computers, or as skilled labour in local factories, or have set up their own handicraft businesses.

However, those people (such as the Hmong) coming from rural settings, with no education, who may be non-literate, who have not participated in a technological society, and who have very different customs and values take a long time to adjust to Canadian society. In Kitchener-Waterloo, these people almost always end up with the lowest paying, most arduous jobs in local industries which rely on hand labour (automobile component producers, garment industries, meat or chicken packing companies) and very rarely get any better jobs as time goes on.

Integration and adaptation for any group of people is often made difficult when certain aspects of their own transposed culture conflict with the new dominant culture. Thus, the roles of politics and authority in a past culture which was not democratic can affect people's willingness to participate in the Western-style democracy in Canada. So too, can an authoritarian-style ("banking" style) education in the past culture influence people's willingness to direct their own learning in a Canadian classroom.

Many of the Hmong who already were literate when they came here were educated in Laotian school systems. Their experience of authority is based on their past experiences in a rigid, "banking" style of educational system. The North American problem-posing approach may seem unacceptable for such people who unquestioningly took part in non-democratic systems where no participatory processes existed, politically or educationally. However, the more critical these refugees are of the systems which they have come out of, the more pleased they may be for the chance openly to ask questions in their new cultural setting.

Interference of Transposed Cultural Patterns with Those in Dominant Culture. There are other ways in which habits in the transposed culture can interfere with functioning easily in the dominant culture. Often newcomers find themselves in confusing or embarrassing situations, either because of having different values or from misunderstanding some aspect of the new culture. Such cultural misunderstandings come about, regardless of whether or not we are literate or well-educated. Sharing cultural mishaps in ESL classes provides opportunities for comparing the transposed and dominant cultures.

Elsewhere in this paper several examples have been given pertaining to Hmong health practices. There is one practice, used to cure fevers, which has been generally misunderstood by North Americans. It is the practice of pinching the skin until it is bruised in a few key places. In one or two cases this method was improperly applied by a mother to an infant, and the mother was legally in jeopardy for abusing her child. When the Hmong explained their remedy to the child abuse team, it clarified the method of treatment. The explanation also showed that the mother had not understood how to apply the proper form of treatment practiced in her own culture.

Sharing cultural situations and exploring the problems they raise serves several functions. First, the act of sharing allows people to talk about themselves and the confusion they are experiencing in a safe setting, where no one will laugh at them. The newcomers can build their self-confidence by sharing the normal practices in the transposed culture. This sharing can set a climate for later looking critically at practices and issues raised in both the dominant and transposed cultures. This chapter will conclude by exploring the role of critical education in understanding culture and in learning the second language.

Critical Education

Culture is generally defined as the set of beliefs and practices most prevalent in one's social setting. For critical theorists and educators (Giroux, 1981; Shor, 1980, 1986; Moriarty & Wallerstein, 1979) , however, culture has a more explicit meaning. By culture, Freire (1973a,1973b; 1985) means an interactive process of creating the world around oneself--participating in society and changing it through one's own contributions. Wallerstein (1983) expands the definition by saying that culture is not only defined by music, arts and crafts, but also"...includes how people labor, create and make life choices" (p.5). Critical educators believe that living in society requires that individuals make decisions about how they will interact with the society--what they will buy, read, wear, eat, say etc.--and those decisions represent distinct cultural values.

Critical ESL educators (Barndt, 1984; Barndt, Cristall, Marino, 1982; Duncombe et al., 1979; Freire, 1973a &1973b; Moriarty & Wallerstein, 1979; Price & Montgomery, 1985; Wallerstein, 1983) see a special relationship between motivation and culture. Language is the primary vehicle through which people participate in or have access to a culture. Thus, as the learners begin to pose problems about their lives, their questioning and desire to participate in the wider society creates a motivation for second language learning.

Before newcomers can decide whether or not they want to become integrated into the new society, they have to understand the new cultural values.

By the same token, before they can decide how much of their own transposed culture to retain or give up, they must look at it reflectively. Looking at one's culture reflectively or critically is something we almost never do because we are so immersed in it.

My experience of working with the Hmong indicates to me that it is easier to become integrated into a new society if one has a critical awareness of one's own transposed cultural values along with those of the new dominant culture. Becoming integrated into a new society here implies a definition which goes beyond those provided by Berry (1980), or Gardner & Lambert (1972). Being integrated means being capable of bringing about a change in one's situation. It also implies retaining some aspects of the transposed culture (Berry, 1980). Once the Hmong started looking at their own values, such as those expressed in their medical practices, they became aware that they preferred some of their own styles of practicing medicine to Western styles.

One way to arrive at a critical awareness of the dominant society is through sharing transposed cultural values and comparing them with those in the dominant culture, as outlined in the two models in Chapter Two. The act of cultural sharing provides an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding, and sets a climate for conscientization. In my teaching, I found that the act of sharing and exchanging alone removed me from the authority role figure, thus putting me on a more equal footing with the learners. At the same time, the sharing increased the Hmong's self-confidence and reinforced their right to maintain their unique cultural identity.

My underlying goal in language teaching was to provide a learning situation which engendered a process of conscientization while learning ESL and Ll/literacy. My intention was to empower the Hmong to use their language to attempt to solve problems as they encountered them. Earlier, in the Introduction, 'conscientization' was defined as "the process where people become aware of the larger society and how they related to it." As the Hmong were encouraged to participate in praxis they became self-directed in their learning (Price &

Montgomery, 1985).

The activity through which the class engages in praxis is having dialogues like those used by Freire in his culture circles (1973a &1973b), or those which Shor (1980) used with his students at New York City College. Shor engaged his students in a process of examining the mass culture in which they lived. As they did so, they began to question the structures in their own lives which they had formerly seen as immovable and the aspects of authority which they had seen as inviolable (1980).

Dialogues about culture--transposed or dominant--should draw from the learner's own experiences. Giroux (1981) recommends using

> the lived experiences of the students themselves as a starting point for developing classroom experiences in which students discover how they give meaning to the world and how such meaning can be used reflectively to discover its own source and limits (p.29).

In the Hmong class, the cultural sharing around the embroideries and the discussion of events like the worm incident were starting points for encouraging dialogue.

To understand how dialogue and praxis can arise out of other sorts of cultural sharing, we can go back to the Hmong treatment for fevers. In having a dialogue about this issue, broader themes might be raised beyond the treatment itself. These might include what rights parents have in administering treatments, how one decides what treatment to administer, and what rights patients have in any medical system--that of the Hmong or North Americans. These themes could be dealt with critically, by following the steps outlined in the second model for problem-posing in Chapter Two.

The degree to which these issues can be explored will be dependent on how much the participants already understand about the cultural norms pertaining to the issues. For example, the learners may have no understanding of child protection laws in Canada. Before critiquing the broader issues raised by the pinching treatment, there would need to be sharing about people's rights (including children's rights) in both the transposed culture and the dominant culture. Furthermore, it could be that for some people (like the Hmong), criticizing the system would have brought severe repercussions in their own country. For these people, their willingness to participate in critical dialogue will be dependent on their being aware of their freedoms in the new dominant society.

The role of critical education is not merely to criticize the conditions around one. More important, it is to create an attitude within a class of openness, sharing and questioning which leads to social awareness. Once this attitude is established, learning can take place through sharing and questioning.

The use of critical education in the context of cultural sharing in the ESL/L1 literacy classroom is a holistic process involving the stages outlined in the models in Chapter Two: a) identifying a theme; b) engaging in dialogue about practices in transposed and dominant cultures; c) posing personally relevant problem(s) related to the theme; d) examining how the problems would be resolved in each of the transposed and dominant culture; e) having the learners try to resolve the problems; f) reflecting and analyzing the successes or failures of the attempts. As the newcomers proceed from step to step, they learn new language skills as they become, in Freire's (1973a & 1973b) term, 'cultured' people.

Summary

I began Chapter Three by presenting two sets of questions pertaining to motivation and the non-literate ESL learner, and culture and its effect on language learning. The chapter's discussion attempts to explain how motivation and cultural-sharing are inter-related, and how motivation, cultural-sharing and critical education are all integral parts of second language learning, particularly for the non-literate ESL learner.

Chapter IV

Creating a Conceptual Framework for Teaching

Throughout the first three chapters only brief reference was made to the tools of teaching--approaches, methodologies, activities--apart from the problem-posing approach. While I found problem-posing combined with cultural sharing to be the most effective approach in teaching, I also used an eclectic combination of other approaches, methods and activities. In this chapter, first I shall describe the conceptual framework used in my teaching, and then I shall discuss the pros and cons of the approaches, methods and activities which I used with the Hmong. I shall conclude by discussing the advantages of an overall teaching style which is eclectic.

Assumptions, Approaches, Methods and Activities

Approach, method, technique and activity are terms which are used interchangeably throughout ESL/literacy literature. Irrespective of which terms and definitions are used, having a conceptual framework for teaching helps one choose appropriate teaching tools. Three levels (adapted from Paulston & Bruder, 1976) describe my own conceptual framework for teaching, based on my work with the Hmong. These levels are illustrated by the Venn diagram in Figure 3.

The first, all-encompassing level (the outer circle) includes the theoretical foundations and assumptions upon which I based all subsequent activities. There were two assumptions, or givens in the Hmong course. One was that the teaching was done within the context of using critical awareness (Freire, 1970, 1973a, 1973b). The second assumption was that literacy teaching would be based on psycholinguistic theories (Gibson & Levin, 1975; Goodman & Goodman, 1977, 1981; Smith, 1978; Smith, Goodman & Meredith, 1970).

The second level (the middle circle) includes the methods and approaches

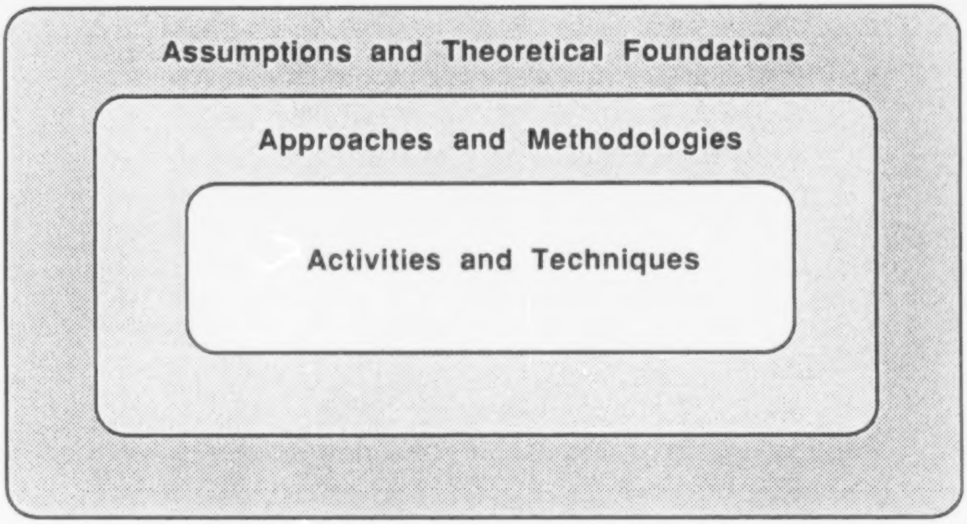

Assumptions and Theoretical Foundations
Approaches and Methodologies
Activities and Techniques

Figure 3. A conceptual framework for teaching, described in three levels

which were used to carry out the language teaching. In the Hmong class, the problem-posing approach (Wallerstein,1983) followed from the basis of critical awareness. The Language Experience Approach (LEA)(Bernstein & Iveson, 1985; Feeley, 1979; Rigg, 1977)--which will described later--is based on the psycholinguistic theory.

The third level (the innermost circle) contains those activities or techniques through which the methods were implemented. Those activities were also congruent with the methods and approaches. To teach the Hmong to read and write the dialogue about the worms (an example of LEA), a range of activities was used including role play, limited phonics, sight word approach, matching words, cutting up sentences. Based on the dialogue, other lessons were designed to provide the Hmong with functional oral language. Such lessons taught people how to complain to the farmer and how to ask for a ride if they missed the bus home. The goal was to provide an eclectic combination of different kinds of activities to try to meet all the learners' needs (Haskell, 1978; Moskowitz, 1980; Strauch, 1978).

This description of the Venn Diagram provides an overview of my conceptual framework for teaching the Hmong. The next section will provide an analysis of those theories, methods and approaches which I used, including their advantages and disadvantages. Since I have already discussed problem-posing at length, less will be said about this approach. Special attention will be given to a phonics method often used to teach ESL literacy--The Laubach Method. The rationale for this discussion is that it is one of the most popular approaches to teaching literacy, and therefore warrants an explanation of why I chose not to use it.

Psycholinguistic Method

Going back to my conceptual framework diagram in Figure 3, the outer ring of the assumptions and philosophical theories contains the psycholinguistic method. Although this method is applied particularly to literacy rather than fluency, it is relevant in oral as well as written communication. In literacy, the method is also sometimes called 'reading for meaning.' The assumption in this method is that we learn language by beginning with the whole--the context--and later breaking the whole into parts (Smith, Goodman & Meredith, 1970).

Language is more that just a string of words. Thus, if readers can only phonetically sound out a word, it does not guarantee that they also understand the words (Strauch, 1978). Similarly, in speech, listeners look for a variety of cues, including visual cues provided by gestures and facial expressions, to help understand what is being said.

Psycholinguists view language as a code: a system for communicating meaning. The process of reading is 'decoding.' Just as the listener looks for cues in oral communication, the reader looks for cues within the text. The cues may either be within the words themselves (shape, letter-sound relationships, recurrent spelling patterns, affixes, or whole words); or the cues may be within whole passages (patterns of words, contextual meaning, redundancy in language cues, intonation) (Smith, Goodman & Meredith, 1970).

There is an overlap between oral language and written language in looking for contextual meaning when it comes to stress or inflection in words. The words "I love you" can have many different meanings, depending on the inflection of the voice, the rhythm of the words, and which word takes the most emphasis. For example, I can say **'I** love you,' meaning for sure, I am one person who loves you. Or I can say 'I love **you,** ' meaning I love you, and you alone. Additional meanings can be added with rises in pitch and stress on words, as in **'I** love **you?'** meaning, you think I am in love with you, of all people?

Decoding sentences even as simple as the "I love you" statement also requires both the speakers and the readers to draw from a common experience. If the material to be decoded is out of context--places, customs, people--the language will be difficult to decode. Communication is dependent on shared experiences (Smith, Goodman, & Meredith, 1970).

Advantages

The psycholinguistic method, as a system for teaching literacy, relies on starting with material which is personally relevant and familiar to the reader. Using this approach with the Hmong helped to build their self-confidence as they became successful at guessing from the context. The whole language approach encouraged them, as new readers, to rely on any available cue to discover meaning in the text.

Disadvantages

This method does not set out simple, easy-to-follow steps for teaching literacy. Language learning is viewed as a complicated task, thus requiring the teacher to use as wide a variety of activities as possible.

Use in the Hmong Class

The psycholinguistic method for teaching literacy proved to be successful with the Hmong. The primary reason was that it did not heavily rely on decoding words using phonics. In the Hmong class I tried to make sure all written and oral material was in a context everyone would understand. The use of the Hmong embroideries provided an opportunity for me to share visually in events and routines of their past so that we could find common words to describe their past lives. In literacy we used folk stories which had been written from the Hmong oral tradition. Thus, everyone in the class was already familiar with the drift of the story and had many contextual cues to draw on in their reading.

Language Experience Approach (LEA)

One technique or activity for teaching literacy, based on psycholinguistic assumptions, is the Language Experience Approach (LEA). The basic idea in LEA is to use the learners' own language in the preparation of reading materials

(Bernstein & Iveson, 1985; Rigg, 1977). After the story has been dictated, the teacher reads it aloud, while the learners read along silently. The goal is for the learners to read the stories on their own.

It is important to write down the learner's own words, complete with grammatical mistakes and all (Rigg, 1977). The idea is to use the reader's own language as a base on which to build further reading materials. Only later are corrections introduced, after the learners can easily read and write their own dictated materials (Rigg, 1977). The purpose of the method is to capture the language the learners already know rather than initially to teach new language. The goal is to help the learners make associations between the spoken and written word (Rigg, 1977).

There are a variety of activities which can be used to ensure that the learners are really reading and have not merely memorized the story. For example the story can be broken down into sentences, and the sentences shuffled so that the learners must arrange them in the proper order (Rigg, 1977).

Advantages

There are several reasons why this approach worked so well with the Hmong class. First, the material we used was personally and socially relevant. Second, it allowed them to use a variety of techniques to learn to decode meaning and word sounds. Finally, it was possible to use the same story to teach at a variety of levels within one class by having all class members work at their own level and pace.

Disadvantages

The greatest drawback of using this method is that it is most effective with learners who know at least a minimal amount of spoken English. Generally, the method is best suited for classes where the teacher can work one-to-one. Also, when an LEA story is being used as an example to many people, some teachers believe that the correct grammatical forms should be used to avoid embarrassment and reinforcement of errors.

Use in the Hmong Class

The story which I presented in Chapter Two, in Model Two, arising out of the worm incident is one example of LEA. The learners originally dictated the story to me, and I transcribed it as they dictated. Only later, after the class had acted out the story, did I refine the grammar when we used it as a model for a dialogue with the entire class.

LEA can take many other forms. One is using journals or brief autobiographies which learners dictate. Another is to use wordless pictures books, designed especially for children. Still another form we used in the Hmong class was to write a story based on photographs which the Hmong brought showing the occupation of their homeland by Communist soldiers. The beauty of LEA is that it teaches oral fluency and literacy by building on familiar, meaningful language which the learner is likely to use again.

Functional and Competency-based Methods

Two other major approaches which I incorporated in the Hmong class were the functional and competency-based teaching methods. Although these two methods are not exactly the same, I have combined them because in both cases the goal is to teach language which will help the learner perform a specific task. 'Functional literacy' itself is a term which was used particularly by Unesco to describe its literacy programs implemented in the Third World during the 1960's and 1970's (Bataille, 1976; Strauch, 1978). Functional literacy was primarily linked to economic and social development. However, it also drew on Freire's goal in literacy training to conscientize the new literates. (Unesco, 1976).

At the same time as the functional method was being implemented in the Third World, competency-based education became prevalent in the United States. It grew out of Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, and particularly out of a study commissioned in 1971 by The Department of Adult Education of the U.S. Office of Education to identify the skills necessary for an adult to function successfully in contemporary society (Center for Applied Linguistics, Series #12, 1982). The study identified

> 65 competencies an adult must be able to perform to function in society by integrating four basic skill areas (communication, computation, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships) with five knowledge areas (occupational, consumer, health, government and law, and community resources) (Center for Applied Linguistics, Series #12, 1982).

An example of a competency is to be able to fill out a job application or write a cheque at the bank.

Advantages

The greatest strength of this method is that when it is successful it provides learners with language which will help them function on their own in the community and ideally, integrate more easily into the new culture. Gaining skills in problem-solving should help build the learners' self-confidence, thereby helping them to risk trying out their spoken and written language in public situations. Finally, by assessing the learners' needs it is possible to tailor the course to meet those needs. In addition, the learners can be involved in setting their own goals and evaluating their own progress according to how well those goals have been met.

Disadvantages

An inadequacy of this approach is that it is possible for the teacher to focus on the competency alone without exploring wider issues raised around a given competency theme. For example, suppose a learner wants to know how to ask the supervisor in a company if she can go see the nurse. The teacher should also help the learner explore the roots of his or her complaint (problem), and what options there are for avoiding or solving it in the future. The ideal use of competency-based teaching is to integrate it with the problem-posing approach.

Use in the Hmong Class

In the Hmong class we frequently practiced dialogues and role plays which were functionally (or competency) oriented. Such competencies were suggested by the learners themselves and included learning to ask the price of a vegetable at the local market; or to ask to work overtime at a factory, or to request a transfer on the city bus. As people became more explicit in their goal-setting, it became possible to teach more competencies.

Competency-based learning can easily be applied to the Models outlined in Chapter Two. In the Model I, health care competencies were taught, and corollary issues raised in comparing Hmong and North American health care practices. In addition to teaching the language to perform a specific task, additional issues can be raised, such as comparing the prices of produce sold in the market and stores owned by multinationals; or exploring why everyone in the factory does not get asked to work overtime.

Whole Word and Phonics Activities

Both the phonics and the whole word activities can be used as methods by themselves. However, I used them as activities within the context of other methods and approaches, such as problem-posing and LEA. The two systems draw on complementary but different word-attack skills.

Whole Word or Sight

The whole word or sight approach is based on memorizing words (identifying by sight) through recognizing the pattern or shape of the word, and through guessing it from the context. In the sight method described by Vaut (1982), familiar words are written on cue cards which are then used for a variety of exercises. The method relies on quickly building up a sight vocabulary of familiar words.

Advantages

This approach seems to work best for people who have good visual sight memories. The advantage of the method is that it starts by focussing on meaning rather than decoding. This focus encourages the new readers to look for cues and draw from contextual knowledge. This approach is most ideally used in combination with other approaches.

Disadvantages

One technique used in the sight method is to learn to identify words by shape. For people who find memorizing difficult, it is easy to confuse words which have similar shapes and where only the vowel differs, as in pet, pat, pit (Strauch, 1978). The approach is most effective in English for learning words which are phonetically irregular, such as through, cough, thought,tough, though, plough; or for learning words which are not only phonetically irregular, but visually appear unique as well, such as the word exit.

Use in the Hmong class

In the Hmong class we used words which were in the school building and close by: washroom, welcome, push, pull, sale, exit. More will be said about how the sight method was used in conjunction with phonics in the discussion of phonics.

Phonics

Phonics emphasizes teaching the correlation between sound (phoneme) and symbol (grapheme) correlation and is typically taught by teaching vowel sounds first. The goal is for people to be able to use their acquired skills to pronounce words by 'sounding them out.' Thus, people who have learned to read phonetically should be able to pronounce any word, whether or not they have seen it or heard it before. This approach is most appropriate for languages like Spanish or Portuguese which are perfectly phonetic, but less appropriate for languages like English which is phonetically irregular (Bernstein,1980; Strauch, 1978).

Because phonics has played such an important role in literacy training, particularly throughout the Third World, it merits a full discussion of the pros and cons of its use. Therefore, before describing how I used the phonics and sight methods as one of many activities, I will provide some background on one phonics approach developed by Frank and Robert Laubach (1960).

Phonics as an approach was popularized by the missionary Frank Laubach, who developed the approach in 1915 in the Philippine Islands for the Maranow people (Harman, 1970; Strauch, 1978). Laubach lived with the Maranow people and transliterated their language using a Roman alphabet and phonemic system (Laubach & Laubach, 1960) In the 1930's, after developing this system, Laubach applied the same principles to teaching literacy in countries throughout the world.

The system involves using a chart which incorporates a picture with a letter superimposed over it. The picture is to remind the learner of the key word, and also serves as a mnemonic device for remembering sounds. The method involves ample repetition: each letter is shown five times, and the reading lessons themselves contain repeated phrases. The lessons have no plot, and the material is pre-determined (Laubach & Laubach, 1960; Laubach, Kirk & Laubach, 1981). Simplicity is a principle which overrides interest created through personal and social relevance (Gudschinsky, 1973; Laubach & Laubach, 1960).

Advantages of the Laubach phonics approach

The greatest advantage of the system is that it can be easily learned and passed on to others by people with little training, true to Laubach's (1960) goal where "each one teaches one." If the new literates can sustain their own motivation for learning to read and write through the "thrill" (Laubach, 1960, p. 16) of learning alone, then phonics as an approach can be successful. As pointed out before, the system also is most effective in perfectly phonetic languages. For such languages, the word attack skills allow the learners to construct (write) or decipher (read) any new word they can say or which they see in print. In irregularly phonetic languages such as English, phonics can provide clues for pronouncing words or recognizing letter combinations.

Another advantage of the system is that the practice of using tutors fosters an empathic relationship between the learners and tutors, thus encouraging learning. In addition, the learners can progress at their own pace.

Disadvantages of the Laubach phonics approach

There are several shortcomings in the approach if used in isolation. The biggest drawback for ESL non-literates is that the approach is based on the assumption that the learners are already familiar with the sounds of the language they are learning, which is not the case for any ESL learners (Bernstein, 1980; Strauch, 1978).

There is an inherent problem with focussing entirely on 'word attack' skills which start with the parts. The learners often do not develop their skills in reading for meaning (Goodman & Goodman, 1977, 1981). Strauch (1978) claims that emphasizing the parts without the wholes leads to "'word readers' who can figure out the pronunciation of words but cannot get any connected thought from their meaning" (p. 89).

Another shortcoming which relates to reading contextually is that Laubach stories preclude context by excluding plot (Strauch, 1978). The teaching method makes no effort to touch people's lives personally, socially or politically by drawing on their own stories or experience.

Generally, there are also some drawback with the visuals. The earlier primers designed for use outside the third world showed people in western style dress (The First Literacy Primer in Spanish, Laubach & Laubach, 1960, p. 22). The artists assumed that the non-literate can visually discriminate three dimensional drawings. Cole and Scribner (1974), Hvitfeldt (1986) and Zimmer & Zimmer (1978) have shown that non-literates can not automatically discriminate such drawings: visual literacy, like verbal literacy, is also a skill which must be learned.

The more recent versions of the Laubach books in English show much greater sensitivity to including people from different cultures, as well as men and women in different roles--a woman playing basketball, and a man cooking (Skill Book I, p. 20, 1981; and Skill Book, p. 61, 1983). However, there are still some graphics which might be difficult to discern because of the material depicted. One such graphic shows a man yelling through a megaphone--a device with which many new Canadians may not be familiar (Skill Book I, p. 20, 1981).

The greatest difficulty in using the phonics approach arises in teaching non-literates irregular languages like English, where there are "varying syllabic patterns, including closed syllables, consonant clusters or dipthongs" (Strauch, 1978, p. 89). The confusion of using phonics is compounded for non-literates if neither the first language nor second language (as in the case of the Hmong) are phonetic, or, (also as is the case in Hmong) if each language is based on different phonetic principles.

Use in Hmong class

The potential confusion of simultaneously teaching two languages with different phonetic systems was why I opted only to use phonics as a technique, in limited circumstances, in teaching the Hmong. The Hmong language was originally transliterated in the Roman alphabet by French missionaries who tried to represent sounds in a way which mirrored the French vowel sound system. In Hmong there are no final consonant sounds and each word is uttered at one of eight intonations, involving rising and falling pitches. The intonation is indicated by one of seven final consonants, (b, d, g, j, m, s, or v) (Heimbach, 1969, p. xxiv). Thus, the name 'Xob' would be pronounced 'saw:' a level, high pitch. The reader can see how confusing it would be to teach the Hmong the English word 'sob' after teaching them to write the name 'Xob.'

The other specific area of confusion between Hmong and English is in the use of double or triple consonants to represent sound clusters. In English we say the word rhinoceros, or rhino for short, by ignoring the 'h' and pronouncing only the 'r.' In Hmong, however 'rh' (as well as 'ch,' and 'nch' are pronounced with a puff of air following the initial consonant.

Another example is the consonant "c" which in English is described as hard (as in 'carbon') or soft (as in 'cell'). In Hmong the"c" has a sound something like the end of a sneeze, as in 'ah--**catchy**ou.' These two examples illustrate the confusion which would have arisen from teaching phonics in this bilingual class.

There were certain times when I combined phonics and the sight-method as techniques by isolating sound clusters in Hmong and having the class match cards with those clusters with other words in a passage. This technique also sometimes worked in looking at passages of both English and Hmong where initial sounds were the same, as in words with n, f, h, v, m, l, y. In reading, I relied heavily on the whole-word method, which necessitated memorization by learning the shape of the word and guessing from the context. Again, many exercises involved matching cards with whole words with the correct word written in sentences on the board, or on handouts. These techniques were used in each of the Models described in Chapter Two after the stories had been generated by the class themselves. They were thus within the overall context of the problem-posing approach.

Earlier, an advantage in using the Laubach phonics system was said to be the tutorial approach to teaching. While in many cultural contexts this approach might be favoured, it would not have worked well in the Hmong class. As Hvitfeldt (1986) has also noted, the Hmong learned best in a group context rather than in a one-to-one situation. This discrepancy again indicates the importance of using methods and approaches which are most suited to a given learning situation.

The Laubachs (1960) laid important groundwork for others working in the literacy field. By building on their work and using methods based on the most recent research, such as psycholinguistics, it is possible to utilize a wider variety of tools in teaching.

Problem-posing Approach

Since I discussed problem-posing at length in Chapter Two, I will not outline the method further here. However, I will present some of the advantages and disadvantages of using the method.

Advantages

The primary advantages of the approach is that, if it works, the learners will emerge as independent thinkers and actors who will attempt to solve problems in their own lives as well as improve the society in which they live. The method relies on material drawn from the learners' own lives, thus it is personally relevant and familiar. As the learners begin to raise questions, discuss issues and take actions, their self-confidence is improved. The more self-assurance people have, the more willingly they are to attempt to use their newly acquired language in public. As the learners' self-esteem improves, the process of using language in the community is more likely to facilitate integration into the new community.

Disadvantages

Many teachers think that problem-posing is a method only suited to marginalized, disadvantaged people. However, the goal of problem-posing is to lead to a greater critical awareness of one's world, and to try to improve that world. Thus, it is equally applicable to a non-unionized, low-wage labourer in a factory as the white collar management who employs the labourer. The questions are how to improve our daily lives, and our lives for ourselves and for future generations.

The greatest disadvantage of the approach is that it demands a great deal from the teacher: flexibility, spontaneity, good listening techniques, patience, risk-taking. The teacher can follow models such as those in this thesis, but the content of the method is always open and changing, as are the activities which are determined by the learners' specific language needs. The teacher also needs to be a partner in learning with the class members as they learn language skills and raise questions about their own lives.

Use in the Hmong Class

The two models which incorporate the problem-posing approach and cultural sharing proved to be a successful way of motivating the Hmong to learn English and begin to acculturate in Canadian society. Engaging in cultural sharing provided opportunities for the Hmong to be reflective about their past and new cultures, and to value their own culture.

As the Hmong gained self-confidence they risked using their English to solve problems which they encountered in the community. Each successful attempt in using problem-posing skills (when they missed their rides or they got cheated by the farmer or someone lost a purse) also improved their levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Thus, both the cultural-sharing and problem-posing increased the Hmong's motivation to come to class as well as to acculturate.

An Eclectic Approach

The main point of the previous discussion is that the most effective teaching system incorporates an eclectic combination of approaches, methodology and activities. Haskell (1978) defines an eclectic methodology or approach as "one which utilizes the best (most appropriate and/or useful) parts of existing *methods* " (p. 21, parentheses and italics in the original). The more approaches, methods and techniques teachers are aware of, the better equipped we will be to draw on them when needed.

Use in the Hmong Class

In the Hmong class I tried to choose a particular methodology, approach or activity by continously looking back at the learners' needs. One way I kept in touch with those needs was through the formal and informal assessments throughout the course. The assessments served two purposes: they encouraged the learners in setting their own goals, and they assisted me in tailoring the course to help the learners meet those goals.

Although there were several methods (phonics and sight word) which I would never have used in isolation, they proved helpful when adapted appropriately and used selectively. There was a wide range of learning styles within my class (some people learned better by sight, while others by using phonics). Thus, using a combination of approaches met all of the needs of the learners, at least some of the time.

Summary

Although I have just recommended an eclectic approach, I applied it within the framework of the Venn Diagram presented in Figure 3, where critical education and psycholinguistics formed the umbrella or largest set within which all the approaches, methods and activities were applied. The two models presented in Chapter Two represent eclectic combinations of the various approaches, methods and activities described above. However, there were two main goals in the models. The first was to help the learners become reflective about their past and new cultures, and the second was to enable them to create change within their own lives.

Chapter V

Summary, Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

I have had two purposes throughout this thesis. My first aim has been to share the process of discovery which led to the design of the two models for incorporating cultural sharing with problem-posing in teaching ESL and LI literacy to non-literates. My second intention has been to demonstrate the effectiveness of using the two models in not only teaching Hmong, but non-literates from any cultural background. By describing my experiences in working with the Hmong, I hoped that others would exclaim some 'ah ha's' as they recognized common stumbling blocks or openings in the process of teaching any non-literates how to speak, read and write in a second language.

Summary

The thesis began by describing a special bilingual class set up particularly for Hmong women through a grant from English in the Working Environment. The project had several goals. One was to improve the women's self-confidence by teaching them literacy in their mother tongue at the same time as English. A second was to increase their awareness of the correlation between the spoken and written word. A third goal was to encourage the women to reflect on elements in their past and new cultures to assist them in deciding which to keep and which to forget. A final goal was to give the women problem-solving skills which would enable them to become independent in their new society.

Each of the above goals was met. The two models encouraged the participants to raise questions about their lives (getting cheated by the farmer),to take initiatives to solve the problems (taking the farmer to court), and to become reflective about their transposed and new dominant culture (sharing marital customs). As the learners proceeded through each step of the model their self-confidence increased. Through the literacy and oral language activities incorporated in the models, they achieved an understanding of the correlation between the oral and written word. The evaluation of the course indicated that these goals were met as the Hmong learned through the two models for cultural sharing and problem-posing. Although the program was especially designed for women, the two "inadvertent" men (the shyest members of the class) also showed improvements in their language skills and their levels of self-confidence.

Chapter Two provided a view of the Hmong's past culture in Laos through the descriptions of cultural sharing activities used in teaching ESL/LI literacy. First, I described the listening and observing activities which I used to design course material based on the cultural sharing. Then I gave special attention to the critical awareness theory of Paulo Freire and its value in the ESL/LI literacy classroom. The chapter closed with a presentation of two models which emerged from incorporating problem-posing and cultural sharing. Each model followed a sequence of steps which can be used by any ESL/LI literacy teacher to help people reflect upon their cultural identities and explore solutions to daily problems.

Problem-posing is a teaching methodology which is at cultural variance with Hmong traditional values and practices. However, through introducing it with cultural sharing as described in the two models, the Hmong not only engaged in problem-posing in the class, but also applied it to their lives outside of class.

Adult education principles laid the foundation for designing the two teaching models. Chapter Three described some of these principles such as affirming the uniqueness of each learner; ascertaining whether or not the learner's basic needs (as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy, 1954) are met before trying to meet higher needs; finding ways to improve the learner's self-confidence; basing the course material on the learner's own goals; involving the learner in evaluating his or her own progress; challenging the learner to attempt to pose and solve his or her own problems.

The two areas dealt with in adult education literature which have particular bearing on ESL/LI literacy teaching are motivation and culture. Chapter Three raised several questions about the relation of motivation and culture to adult learning, and then attempted to answer those questions by drawing on my work with the Hmong refugees and by looking at relevant research. I found that being motivated to learn a new language was dependent on the desire to fulfill eight objectives which relate both to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs and to Freire's (1973b) theory of *conscientization.* The chapter concluded by examining ways in which cultural integration is dependent on reflecting about past culture and on understanding ways in which the transposed culture interferes with assimilation in the dominant culture.

The final chapter presented the conceptual framework on which I based my choice of methods, approaches, activities and techniques. My intent was first to demonstrate how the two models presented in Chapter Two fit within that framework. My second intention was to show how an eclectic combination of activities, based on the problem-posing approach and psycholinguistic method, best suits the ESL/non-literate learner. A critical description was given of each method, pointing out its advantages and disadvantages, as well as how I used it with the Hmong.

Extra attention was given to a critical analysis of one phonics approach, the Laubach method. The Laubach method is one of the most widely used approaches in literacy teaching in Canada and throughout the world. Thus, it seemed important to justify my decision not to use it by describing some of the weaknesses of the approach, when teaching ESL to non-literate groups.

My intention throughout the chapter was to describe how the models presented in Chapter Two emerged from my assumptions and theoretical foundations. Similarly, I discussed how the activities used in the teaching models were based on the approaches and methods. Finally, I showed how all parts of my teaching were congruent with the conceptual framework illustrated in the Venn Diagram in Figure 3.

Concluding Remarks

One of my main questions throughout teaching the Hmong was how to motivate them to learn first language literacy as they also learned to speak

English, as well as how to assist them in the process of acculturation. The two models proved to be successful in motivating those people who came to class in both processes of language learning and acculturation. However, a question remains and has become more relevant since the classes were given: how to motivate any refugee (Hmong, Kampuchean, Salvadorean, Vietnamese) to come to ESL or ESL/LI classes after they have become integrated in the production system as labourers.

There seems to be a critical period of within one to four years of arrival for involving newcomers in language classes. The experience of English in the Working Environment has been that after that time, many newcomers only seem to be motivated to work but not to learn English, even when they are given time off at their jobs to do so. Thus, unless people come to classes, it is unlikely they will ever have an opportunity to engage in critical reflection about their past culture or the new dominant culture they have become part of through their work. Without adequate English, it is even more unlikely that they will be able to avoid being misunderstood and taken advantage of, particularly at their places of work. So the question remains of how to motivate this group of new Canadians at least to come to a few classes in which the models are used.

Recommendations

I will close by making several recommendations related to using culture and problem-posing as vehicles for ESL/L1 literacy teaching.

1. As ESL teachers, we need to find ways of facilitating the integration of newcomers in ways which enable them to a) be independent in our society, b) be inquisitive about their new culture, c) seek to improve conditions in their own lives as well as those in the wider society. One way to accomplish these goals is through incorporating the two models in the community ESL classes and Citizenship courses. However, if the newcomers do not want to attend such classes, we need to seek other ways to attain these goals.

First, we should determine the reasons for people's lack of motivation. Second, we should explore the possibility of using some form of incentives (bonuses, time off work, promotion at work, certification, possibility of citizenship status) through the government or employers to encourage people to come to classes. Third, we should carry out a study to determine exactly what the reasons are for people's lack of interest in coming to classes.

2. We generally expect acculturation to be a one way process in which the newcomers adapt to our dominant culture. Not only we as teachers, but all Canadians have much to gain by being open to learning about the newcomers' past cultures. As teachers, we can bridge cultural gaps by showing an interest in or even adopting some of the cultural practices of the people we are teaching (such as learning to cook their foods). As members of the dominant culture, we have the opportunity to make our own culture richer by adopting elements of other peoples' transposed cultures into our own.

3. In the discussion, reference was made to the varieties of stress--trauma, culture shock--caused by being in a new cultural setting. As teachers, employers or friends of newcomers, we need to make allowances for people's past, and how it might interfere with their integration process. In the ESL classroom, we need to minimize the stress as much as possible, and one way of doing so for non-literates is to allow for translation during the class.

4. As teachers, we need to see our role as co-learners or co-facilitators. We need to be open to changing our teaching styles as needed to suit individual differences of the learners. That may mean compromising some of our own beliefs, such as incorporating some aspects of the "nutritionist" approach, even if we are trying to adhere to a problem-posing approach. Thus, we need to be flexible.

5. It follows, from #3 above, that we need to view methodologies, approaches and activities as tools for teaching, which must be adjusted as is appropriate to the learners needs, the teaching situations, and the goals set out by the learners and teacher together.

6. Our ultimate goal as ESL/L1 literate teachers should be to invite people to be self-reflective in their learning through sharing their culture and engaging in

problem-posing. In some respects, it does not matter what topic or subject matter is used for teaching English--any can be adapted for language teaching. However, because there is such flexibility in the discipline, it opens the door to encouraging a deeper, more significant learning than just rote memorization of words or phrases which are unrelated and not pertinent to anyone's reality. The goal of our teaching should be to give learners a self-actualizing experience which awakens their curiosity and leads them to further involvement in the life of their community.

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